THE THEOLOGY OF A PREACHER

By

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

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THE THEOLOGY OF A PREACHER

BY

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

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TO MY FRIENDS OF
SUMMERFIELD CHURCH
WITH DEEP APPRECIATION OF
A HAPPY PASTORATE

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AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

THE Queen of the Sciences can scarcely be called the Queen of the Preachers—at least not now. In all the multiplied studies and activities of the modern preacher that consuming interest in Christian doctrine which characterized heroic men who once made pulpits thrones has been very much lost sight of. It is the conviction of the author of this book that the adequate preacher must be a preacher-theologian. With that conviction burning in his heart these chapters have been written.

This volume is not a systematic theology. At a later time the author hopes to write a fully worked out and articulated discussion of "The Organism of Christian Belief." In the meantime thoughts about the theology which can be preached, which surge in his mind and have been given out in his own ministry, are here expressed.

No apology is made for the devotional mood which pervades these chapters. The fallacy of trying to write about religion

without being religious scarcely needs detailed criticism. The mood of the book is like the mood of the preacher—it is that of proclamation rather than argument. The test of the whole matter is not a detailed process of reasoning. At last everything rests on whether what is said comes out of life and will eventuate in more life.

In writing this note of introduction I want to include a word of appreciation of my own teacher in systematic theology, Professor Olin A. Curtis. His moral enthusiasm, his penetrating evangelical sensitiveness, and his constant eagerness to organize Christian truth into a vital system have made him a most kindling teacher and a theologian of apostolic zeal.

I by no means mean to claim his agreement with everything in this book. Doubtless his sharp instruments of analysis will find enough to criticize. At any rate, he is the first man to recognize that in theology, as elsewhere, a man must live his own life and speak his own message.

The preacher-theologian has at least one cause for congratulation. Human nature

is on his side. Man is a theological being, and sooner or later he must ask the theological questions. In an age of shifting as to thought, and constant demand as to activity, this may temporarily be lost sight of. But in the long run theology will come to its own. There is no way to get rid of a thing the call for which is structural in the life of man.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH.

Brooklyn, New York,
January, 1912.

CHAPTER I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS OWN EXPERIENCE

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The Significance of His Own Experience

The first important thing about a preacher is that he should be alive. This is by no means so obvious as it sounds. To be rich in vital qualities, to be quickly responsive to all the currents that play through human experience, to be vividly, deeply, and vigorously alive is as superb as it is rare. There are correct preachers, there are earnest preachers, there are learned preachers, there are eloquent preachers; and their qualities are very important for every preacher. When he adds to them the quality of magnetic, contagious vitality, then a man is a preacher indeed.

But we mean something even deeper than this quality of winsome human eagerness which captures constant friends when we say that a preacher must be alive. We mean that he must have lived and fought, that he must have struggled and aspired,

that he must have failed and that he must have succeeded, that joy and sorrow, the hour of waiting and the hour of bewilderment must have been his. We mean preeminently that, passing through the winding pathway of his experience, he must have come to a great discovery. He must have discovered the adequacy of Christ. Jesus must have ceased to be merely the Christ of history. He must have become the Christ of experience.

Every preacher must make this discovery for himself. He sails out across the unknown ocean and discovers the new continent of Christian experience, just as if it had never been discovered before. Every man is his own Columbus here, and his experience is as fresh and full of wonder as if no other man had known the joy of the same discovery.

It is the combination of a deep experience of human things and a deep experience of divine things which makes a man a preacher, and it is exactly this combination which makes a man a theologian. At least, it is this which makes

him the kind of a theologian whose theology can be preached.

Of course the preacher-theologian is a student. He knows what it is to brood over his Bible until its very spirit enters his life. He studies it until the rhythmic music of its great phrases rings through the corridors of his memory. He studies it with all the implements of modern scholarship, that his knowledge may not only be rich and deep, but accurate and scientific. He studies it until the ancient life out of which it comes is pictured in his own mind clearly and vividly. He journeys often into that far past until he has entered into the meaning of its experience. He opens all the windows of his life until the light which shines in the Scriptures is radiant in his own soul. But he brings to his study of the Bible two great personal contributions. He does not come with an empty mind. He comes as a human struggler who has looked out on life with palpitating interest, who has felt its heat, sometimes warming, sometimes burning; who has felt its cold, some-

times stimulating, sometimes freezing. He brings all his alert interest in the world and people. It is as a man of men, dripping with human experience, that he comes to the Bible, and all this human quality is one of his best equipments as a student of God's Word.

He also brings his experience as a Christian. The Son of God has mastered his life. The Saviour has whispered a great word of peace in his soul. He has been made a citizen of the kingdom of God. He has tasted the joy of the great Christian freedom. The world has been made into a new world for him because of his contact with Jesus Christ. The wonder of a new life moving in his heart and brain, the rich joy of a man who has found forgiveness and peace, the new perspective as to life and God and destiny, which his experience as a Christian has given him, he brings to the Bible. So as a man of men and a man of God he extracts from the Scriptures their fundamental theological conceptions, his reading and his study constantly guided and checked by his

experience as a man and his experience as a Christian.

Of course he is a student of church history. He studies it because it tells of the past of men. He studies it because it tells of the past of Christian men. He does not read it as a scholastic exercise. He reads it as a revelation of life. This story of how other men have interpreted the gospel, this story of how other Christians have lived and of what they have thought, is of the greatest interest to him. Slowly through all the burdened years the thought of the Church has clarified. The logic of experience has decided against some ways of looking at the faith. It has decided for others. The history of the Church is a sort of vast laboratory showing how almost every sort of theological conception has worked when it has been put to the test of life. The preacher reads with infinite interest. He wants to make no mistakes in the conceptions he flings forth hot and creative to mold the lives of his people. He wants to learn the lessons of the past. Here too he brings

all his experience as a man and as a Christian. He tests the history of the Church by a standard he finds in his own life. It is made vivid for him because he interprets it in the light of his own struggle and his own peace. So, because he reads the history of the Church with the light of his life as a man and his life as a Christian shining on it, he draws from it the deepest truths the growing life of the Church has to tell. He discovers the contribution the history of the Church and the Church's thought has to make to the theology of a preacher.

Of course he is a student of systematic theology. He understands the eagerness of the great theologians to articulate the truths of the Christian faith into a strong symmetrical organism of belief. He too desires "to see life steadily and to see it whole." He desires to climb to some eminence where he can see the whole of the city of God—the way the streets of the city lie, their relation to each other, and just where the great buildings stand. He wants to see just how the truths of

the faith fit together in one total view of things. And right zestfully he follows the endeavors of the great thinkers to build the structure of their philosophy of the Christian faith. Here too our preacher brings his memories, his knowledge, and his hopes as a man, his memories, his knowledge, and his hopes as a Christian.

He knows the danger of making a system logical but lifeless. He knows the danger of the dissecting room. He does not want to study the corpse of the Christian faith. He wants to study Christianity alive, dominant, the blood rich and pure, the whole vigor of triumphant vitality in every limb. So he tests all that the theologians say by his life as a man and his life as a Christian. Theology must be kept human, and it must be kept electric with the energy of the gospel. It must face all the facts of life; it must face all the facts of God. So, studying theology with the tests his manhood and his Christian experience give, he is able constantly to move toward a Christian view of things which shall be symmetrical, the truths articulated

together; which shall be warmly human, the theology of living men; and which shall glow with all the beauty of the life of God in the soul of man.

The preacher-theologian is a student of the world's literature. He studies it because it is the most revealing output as to the souls of men. He studies it because it is a sort of gigantic mirror held up to the past. If the Bible is a great revelation of God, literature is a great revelation of men. Their noisy activities, their quiet thoughts, their mounting aspirations, their cold, hard despairs, their torrid, tropical joys, their wonder and hope and fear—all these and much more he finds waiting his study in the literature of the world. It has captured human joy and held it bound in garlands of speech. It has captured human strength and built it into sentences like cedars. It has gained possession of the heart, the brain, and the will of man and expressed them in imperishable speech. Not simply the "still sad music of humanity," but all the varieties of the music of humanity, its majors, and its

minors, and its harsh, grating discords, are here.

But to read literature without a guide is to be lost in a confusion of conflicting emotions. It is to have a sense of dashing human feeling beating against one's life without any real comprehension of its meaning. The preacher-theologian reads the world's literature with the two guides he has brought to his other study. His own experience as a man helps him to interpret this vast maelstrom of human emotion expressed in words. His experience as a Christian gives him a standard by which to appraise and value it. He knows that which at its best literature has found. He knows that which at its worst literature has missed. He knows the word which has healing for the tale of woe it tells, the way of peace after all its torturing unrest, and the way of victory after its sin.

So at every point the preacher in his study is essentially a man of God and a man of men. His experience gives him keys to the meaning of that which he finds in books and that which he finds in the

world about him. He has the benefit of academic training, but academic discipline has not contributed the defining element to his equipment. As a man with the real past in human things and in the things of Christ he approaches his tasks.

CHAPTER II

THE MEN AMONG WHOM HE LIVES

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The Men among Whom He Lives

There is a contrast which the preacher faces in his study of man. On the one hand, he reads the chapters on anthropology in his books on systematic theology. On the other, he thinks of James Brown and John Smith and all the other men he knows. Between the anthropology and concrete men there seems to be a great gulf fixed. How shall he so think of James and John as to take advantage of all the profound principles he has learned in the books on theology as they discuss man? And how shall he so read the discussions in the volumes on theology as to add to them the concreteness and the tang of reality which belong to actual human beings? How shall he keep his theory of man human? And how shall he keep his thinking about actual living men philosophically adequate?

These very questions are revealing as to the necessary answers. They suggest a

constant bringing of theology to the test of life, and a study of life in the light of the profoundest principles which come to light as a result of theological discipline.

In truth, the preacher occupies a position of strategy in respect of this whole situation. He has to do with the theory of man. He has to do with actual men. He ought to be able to construct a doctrine of man which will be philosophically adequate and yet surge with the blood of life.

When the preacher-theologian approaches the problem in this attitude, with a sense of concrete men and their actual behavior in the background of his thinking, he is at once struck by the fact that the men of the Bible correspond to his experience of actual men. Whether it be David or Solomon or Peter or John, whether it be Abraham or Jeremiah or Paul or John the Baptist, the men of the Bible impress the reader as actual human beings. The first appeal of the Bible is that it introduces you to a company of real people.

Now, leaving out of account for the present the great moral tragedy which

blights the lives of the men of the Bible and the men of the world about us, what are the defining and significant facts about the people whose fingers touch ours in the daily experiences of life, and those whose faces look out upon us from the ancient Scriptures?

Three outstanding facts impress the student of men's lives: they can know, they can do, and they can feel. The whole of human experience and the whole of the doctrine of man hang about the significance of these three facts.

The knowledge of the ordinary man in the parish of the preacher is, of course, a very different matter from the knowledge of the scientific investigator or the trained thinker. The mind of many a man is much like an old curiosity shop, with odds and ends of knowledge scattered everywhere in the most disorderly fashion. Then there are minds like country stores, with the knowledge needed for daily use conveniently shelved, but carrying very little stock which does not have to do with immediate practical demands. Then there

are minds like art stores, which seem to carry a stock of ideas with reference to their beauty rather than their utility. The use of this mental material is varied enough. Often it is allowed to be covered with dust. There are people who actually use their minds in positive thought only as a matter of last resort when everything else has failed. There are untrained men with a shrewd practical use of the instruments of the mind which is a constant surprise to the observer. There are men who use all mental skill to arrange their view of life according to their own likes and dislikes rather than according to the reality of things. There are minds which are slow but sure-footed. There are minds which have wings but soon tire. There are minds which work with fine steadiness and minds which work by jerks. All of this mental variety the preacher meets in his contact with men. Out of this experience come his first convictions about man. The power to know is a growing thing. It needs training and guidance. The power to know is a moral thing. It must be used with

heroic candor or it will become an instrument of deception.

The second fact about men is their ability to do. When we say that a man can do things we mean something different in kind as well as quantity from what we mean when we say that a horse can do things. The horse obeys the machinery of an animal life. The man obeys the behests of a free and knowing mind. With man, back of the physical act is a mental act. He does a thing with his mind before he does it with his hand.

This doing with consciousness and freedom is not a characteristic of all human activity, but it is a characteristic of much of the activity of all human beings. Men share the life of the lower creation, and their actions are often intuitive and mechanical, the expression of flashing impulse and quick desire. But a man can command his activity. He can make it the servant of his mind. He chooses how much he shall be like a beast and how much he shall be like manhood at its highest.

This mixture of deeds which are a sort

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of mechanical response to environment and deeds which are the slaves of a mastering mind is seen among men everywhere. It is the necessary assumption of practical life that man has the power of reigning over his deeds. It is the clear verdict of careful observation that he does not always do it. Sometimes nature has its way with him. No end of speculative perplexity and difficulty may be encountered by the thinker who attempts to deal with these facts. The preacher-theologian is saved from much academic confusion and many verbal straits by applying the test of life at this point. All of human experience is based on the implicit assumption of freedom. It is a major premise of life. It must not be disturbed. But in many ways it is true that freedom is a possibility rather than a complete possession. The preacher comes to certain definite convictions in respect of this matter. At his high point of experience man is free in the decisions which lead to his deeds. The mastery of his activity is a solemn demand which life makes of him. It is his duty to be free.

The third significant fact about the life of a man is that he can feel. Some things appeal to him more than others. Some people appeal to him more than others. He does not meet life with a cold, critical stare. He has all sorts of feelings about it. The negative of love is hate. As some things and people draw him, so some things and people repulse him. There is a spontaneous up-reach of feeling in response to all the experiences of life.

This matter of feeling is one of much subtlety and perplexity. A man cannot directly command his feelings as he can command his actions. He cannot decide to feel in a certain way. If he attempts to do it, there is simply no emotional response.

On the other hand, a close observation of men makes it clear that if the deep trend of the life moves in a certain direction, in the long run the feelings follow. If a man keeps acting on a certain feeling's suggestion, it grows in strength. If he refuses to make it the basis of a deed, it tends to waste away and die. All this involves what may be called the indirect

control of the feelings. Whatever kind of an emotional outfit a man has, he may become the possessor of a noble devotion by a continued habit of doing noble things. The response is not immediate, but if the evil emotions which enter the house of a man's life are treated with continual coldness, at last they realize that they are not welcome and go away. The way to learn to love the highest is to continue to live as if one loved the highest. The way to banish evil feelings is constantly to refuse to coin them into deeds.

Back of what we have said about knowing and doing and feeling there has been a constant reference to moral standards, a recognition of good and evil, better and worse. This too is a part of human experience. Perhaps it should be denominated the fourth significant fact about man. He does not discover the distinction between right and wrong. He comes to life with that written away in his nature. It is his moral equipment. He does make discoveries as to what is right and what is wrong. Here there is distinction enough in different

men. A man begins life with a sense that there are duties. He goes forth to discover what they are.

This lordship of the moral men all feel, but they do not all accept it. There are ethical rebels in plenty in the world. The fact is that there are just two kinds of moral differences among men. The first arises from the fact that some men are trying to do the right and others are not. The second arises from the fact that honest men differ in their conviction as to what particular things are right and wrong. The second kind of differences arise from the use of the judgment and may exist in men equally earnest. The first represents the fundamental moral cleavage among men.

The consciousness of these various facts rushes in upon the preacher as he attempts to think about man. He gathers them up into a few intense convictions. Man has a complex life of infinite possibility. He can know with a constant increase of completeness and adequacy. He can do with a kingly mastery of his deeds. He can feel with the whole circuit of the emotional

life more and more mastered by the noblest things. His knowledge and activity and feelings are under the moral lordship of a great captain who cries "You ought" in the depths of his soul.

These aspects of a man's life are crowned by another. Something in his nature—something as wide as human experience and as deep as the longings of the heart of man—cherishes a great desire to worship. Man's nature calls for God. In some great sense humanity calls for comradeship with the Most High.

There are vague outreaches in the life of man, there are unquenchable thirsts, and unappeasable hungers, which can be satisfied only when God is known in the intimacy of personal fellowship. "God has made us for himself, and our souls are restless until they find rest in him."

CHAPTER III
THE SUPREME TRAGEDY

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The Supreme Tragedy

The preacher is sitting in his study at night. He feels drenched with the evil of the life of the man who has just left his house. He feels as if the man had left tracks of moral slime when he went away. The weariness of the day's work seems in some way to have departed. With brain moving with quick alertness and heart drawn by the passion and pain of it, the preacher sits staring at sin. Kindly half-truths and apologetic compromising statements stand out in their poor inadequacy. With a relentless moral candor and a stern realism, his mind demands the whole truth. So with the stinging sense of contact with its shamefulness and brutal reality, the preacher works out his theology of sin.

His first feeling is a consciousness that the men who spoke and wrote the great passages of the Bible felt about sin as he feels now. He turns to the fifty-first psalm and reads over the passionate cry of a

stricken soul appalled at its own sinfulness. There he finds something which completely corresponds to the feeling in his own heart, and with all the memories that psalm arouses, there is a personal quality to the repulsion and horror with which he draws back from the full picture of sin which is forming itself in his mind. It is not simply the foe of the man who has just gone from his presence. It is his foe too. And for a moment he seems to feel the hot breath of some beast of the forest against his face, so concrete has his thought become.

There are some chemical reactions which are brought about only by the application of heat. You cannot think of sin calmly and at the same time think adequately. The heat of a mind alive to all its meaning is necessary for a man who would gain a true conception of sin.

Of course it is necessary to make distinctions. There is a difference between sin and evil, though the one often expresses itself in the form of the other. Sin is intentional wrongdoing. Evil is wrongdoing

whether it is intentional or not. Evil is often the result of heredity and environment, and not of personal intention. Sin always has personal intention behind it.

The Bowery child, brought up in an atmosphere of moral loathsomeness, does a great many evil things without knowing that they are evil. It is quite possible that he swears with no more understanding of its wrongness than the parrot who repeats the oaths of a profane sailor. A great amount of the evil of the world is a crystallization of environment into the activity of the particular man. Perhaps some of the evil in the life of the depraved man who has just left the preacher's study was of this sort, but that was not the root of the man's condition. The preacher detected a slimy liking for evil in the man's eye, a certain foul at-homeness with vice, a certain leering personal intention which struck ice to his heart. If the man had been simply a victim, how easy it would have been to pity him! how easy it would have been to come close as a brother to help! But the citadel of the man's person-

ality was wrong. He liked evil. He wanted evil. He disliked the discomfort which resulted from sin, but he was not at all alienated from sin itself. So the preacher faces the heart of the problem. Sin is personal commitment to evil.

Classification, to be sure, is very difficult. A particular man, fairly suffocating with the atmosphere of vice he breathes, may have learned to hate it and be battling with all his strength against it. A man to whom environment and heredity have given every gift may be living a life of hard and cruel selfishness which is the very essence of sin. A man whose thought is much confused, in spite of the vices whose evil he does not understand, may be flinging himself in utter self-abandon out into the attempt to realize some ideal of courage or manhood which has, somehow, penetrated his mind. This is the heroism of the slums. A man who uses Christian phrases with facility may steadfastly refuse to face the moral meaning of some part of his life. This great refusal may brand him a particularly dangerous sort of sinner. Yes, classification is

difficult, but the main principles stand out clearly.

The blighting tragedy of life is when a man turns from the good he knows to be good, to the evil he knows to be evil. The other tragedies which come from moral confusion and moral misconception are widespread enough, and are practically very great problems, but they can be dealt with by education. They can be dealt with by a changed environment. They can be dealt with by the ministry of a loving touch which makes moral truth concrete and clear and luminous. The preacher is ready to assist the social worker in every practical way in his dealing with the problem of evil, but his own task is deeper. It is more fundamental. It is more discouraging. It has to do with the deepest heartache and agony of the world. It is the problem of sin.

Somewhat impatiently the preacher thinks of those kindly and superficial students of life who bring forward true statements about some human experiences and insist that they cover all possible cases. The

man with an imprisoned soul eager for nobility in spite of the mire of life in which he dwells has responded to their kindly ministries. He has blossomed out like a rich and fragrant flower. Then those who ministered to him say: "This is all there is of sin. The opportunity for good has been lacking. Give a man a good environment and you will have a good man."

The preacher thinks of one of the boys of his congregation. His home had a certain glow of winsome purity. It was full of bright good cheer. It seemed as if good morals were a part of the air the boy breathed. Yet from all that he turned to devastating evil. With beautiful and loving tact his mother sought to restrain him. With a sad, kind sternness his father sought to turn him from his evil way. The very resources of friendly, eager, suffering love seemed exhausted in the endeavor to reach that boy. And in vain. He liked bad things. He wanted them. He chose them. He set his face steel-like against helpers and help. He deliberately allied himself with evil.

The preacher feels that he would like to bring this young man with his hard, inscrutable face, strong in its devotion to sin, to the apostles of the moral invincibility of a pure environment. Then he would like to say to them: "Look at this young man! What are you going to do with him?"

The preacher feels deep tenderness for all the misguided earnestness in the world; he knows the meaning of a true heart and a confused brain. Every true thing the modern theorists say about evil he accepts and has made use of again and again. He almost smiles as he thinks how often men deep of sympathy but slow of speech had acted on these principles before modern sociologists had announced them. His own social passion is as eager as theirs. But what they say, true as much of it is, simply ignores the most defining fact of all when they have not really faced the meaning of personal sin.

It is a strange anomaly. It seems as if we might all be experts in the analysis of sin, for we all know what it is to look

at a good thing and not like it and not want it. We all know what it is to look at an evil thing, to eye it with a subtle fascination, and to feel that we want it for ourselves. We all know that eruption of self-will in our feelings which makes everything seem hateful but our own way. We all know the inrush of that imperial self-consciousness which is ready to object even to God if he interferes with our personal plans. We all know that inner anarchy which no tenderness of friends or beauty of environment can change. We all know the pang of a hot and restless heart which enshrines unreason and repulses control. All this is sin, sometimes coming in stately and alluring garb, sometimes coming with furtive eye and cautious step. It is the marshaling of the forces of self-will and evil desire against the higher lordship of righteousness and love. It is the lifting up of the flag of rebellion against the complete mastery of our lives by God.

How we dislike to face these facts! How we cover them with felicitous and evasive

phrases! How easily we are misled by the lure of a phrase which hides a fallacy when that fallacy ministers to our comfort and to our content! With our scientific passion to face and be fair to all the facts of life, is it not strange in what fashion we have failed to face the fact of sin? A botanist has never treated a flower or a weed as we treat this significant fact of life. He does not try to change the flower to make it fit some previous classification. He enlarges his classification to make it fit the flower. The matter of sin is the one matter in which modern thinkers have been conspicuously unscientific.

The preacher goes back in thought to the man who left him an hour ago. He goes out into his wide and varied experience in dealing eye to eye and heart to heart with men. He goes in thought to the vital and relentlessly honest portraits of men in the world's literature. He sees in graphic vision the struggling men who walk through the pages of the Bible. He goes into the most rebellious memories in his own mind and heart. A strange, deep, brooding, sad,

infinitely honest look comes into his eyes. As he kneels by his study chair in prayer he utters some great words:

> "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in thy sight."

CHAPTER IV
THE PLACE OF CHRIST

CHAPTER IV

The Place of Christ

The preacher did not first meet Christ in the Gospels. He saw him first looking out of the eyes of some man who was inspired by the spirit of Jesus and eagerly striving to live according to his will, a man who knew the meaning of the companionship of Christ as well as loyal obedience to his behests. He first knew that Jesus could master men because he met men whom he had mastered. He remembers with a certain gladness the touch of these lives of deep, real piety upon his own. They gave him his first definition of religion.

Then came the Gospels. Their words had long been familiar. The fine cadence of their simple, noble speech had rung in upon his mind from childhood. The old sentences often sound in his ears with a turn of emphasis, a deep tone of roused feeling, which comes from their utterance years ago by those whose very tones were the first important matter in his education.

But the time came when he discovered the Gospels for himself. They sounded out their message to him in the terms of his own thought and study. He had brought his own life, with its anxious intensity of mind and its passionate moral struggles, to the Gospels and then they spoke to him their deepest word.

His first discovery was about Jesus. He could not content himself after this by saying that the Gospels tell about Jesus. He felt that he must say that Jesus lives in the Gospels, Jesus speaks in the Gospels, Jesus walks through the Gospels, and they do not imprison him; for he can walk right out of the Gospels into men's lives.

Following the pages of the New Testament narrative, the preacher has watched Jesus in his dealings with men. There was a secret of fascination in the personality of Jesus. That was evident from the first. He captured men. He awoke their interest. He secured their deep devotion. He mastered their lives. Simply living among men his great human life, he became the central figure in every group

where he was, the dominant influence, the potent personality.

The vivid winning humanity of Jesus was an outstanding impression made upon the preacher as he studied the portrait of Christ in the Gospels. How he would have liked to be with the twelve on those long walks as they went about in Judæa and Galilee! How he would have liked to be one of the group in the evening camp out under the silent, shining stars! How he would have liked to watch the way in which some deep thing in the lives of men and women leaped to respond to the summons of the eyes of Jesus! How he would have liked to feel the pressure of that strong brother man's hand upon his own!

This sense of the actual human experience of Jesus is deepened as he reads the story of the temptations. He watches Jesus under the influence of a mighty spiritual enthusiasm which carries him without food and without hunger for many days. Then comes the desperate reaction. The high glow of the rich enthusiasm fades.

The life comes back from the spiritual heights to the C major of common experience. Then the voice of the body is heard. Hunger calls. It cries out. It becomes intense and torturing in its call. All the need of the body, all the desire of the body seem to focus into one intense demand for bread. Let Jesus perform a miracle and feed himself. Even in the moment of intense physical reaction and longing Jesus recognizes all this as a temptation. Very simply the matter can be put. This is the question involved: Is he to be master of his body or is his body to be master of him? And with mighty spiritual power he thrusts aside the temptation, filling his mind with a great Old Testament word. Jesus was bitterly tempted, but he was always stronger than physical desire.

Before Jesus there came a vision of his work. It was a glittering vision. It presented the world at his feet and him as its victorious ruler. It revealed him master of all men and master of all human institutions. It was very alluring and very beautiful, but it ignored the fundamental

moral problem of the world. It ignored the necessity of a great price of pain being paid for the moral mastery of the world. The king it revealed was king of the bodies of men; they found it necessary to obey his behests; but he was not king of the souls of men. He had not won their deep devotion or transformed their lives. He was the external ruler of unmastered hearts. Without a passion of moral suffering Jesus could become the world's ruler. Only by walking the path of infinite pain could he become the world's Saviour. With imperial strength Jesus banished the picture of an unwounded king for the other picture of a Saviour with a pierced heart.

The full weight of his days of ecstasy and his abstinence from food was coming upon him. Nerves held tense and high for long began to rebel. The awful battle which the most highly strung and gifted and sensitive natures know became his. He fought like a giant with powerful overwrought nerves. He seemed to be on the pinnacle of the temple pressed by a wild desire to cast himself down. Of course the

heavenly Father would save him. The abnormal—the battle of millions of men—faced him and seemed about to master him. But in the very moment of his physical and spiritual weariness Jesus held himself in stern self-mastery. He maintained his poise when overwrought nerves clamored the loudest. He threaded his way steadily among the live wires of mutinous nerves, and was complete monarch of his life in this strange, dangerous hour.

Following the life of Jesus from the days of the great temptation, one impression stands out more and more clearly: Jesus not only fought, but he always won. He was like all other men in knowing the battle of life; he was unlike all other men in never knowing defeat. A certain radiant spotlessness characterized all his life. It was not the pale and colorless perfection of mere freedom from wrongdoing. It was the rich and glowing perfection of words and deeds vibrant and adequate to the need and the demand of every hour. There was a beautiful attractiveness about this sinless life. Mere correctness repels men. This

passionate perfection of full and glowing life draws all the world.

With all the winsome brotherliness of the life of Jesus there is a regal quality to his movement as he walks through the Gospels which cannot escape our notice. He has the dignity and the assured confidence of a king. It is very quiet, very deep in his life, and quite unfathomably steady. You feel at once that here is a life born for mastery, and the territory of that mastery enlarges in your thought until nothing is excluded from it.

The sense of perfect purity and the sense of kingliness Jesus rouses in the vital student of his life make the miracles and the resurrection seem very natural. They are just what you would expect—of him. You can never judge them by themselves. You can never think of them by themselves. They are a part of a total life, in which they fit so perfectly that, so seen, you do not hesitate to accept them.

So you are brought to the place where you are ready to hear the great words of Jesus when he claims to have the power

to forgive sin. It is an astounding claim. It would make you turn in horror from any other man. But with your mind sharpened by the contemplation of his words, your heart warm with the thought of his life and deeds, your conscience calling in some dim way for such a word as he claimed the power to speak, all becomes clear. He did have the power to forgive sin. The word the world most needed to hear he was able to speak. From this winsome, spotless, kingly life the words of forgiveness have a right to come.

Standing back and thinking of it all together, you try to find a way to describe adequately this great, unique Person of whom you find it necessary to believe such wonderful things. There is only one word great enough to describe him. You look squarely at the meaning of that word. You look fully at the portrait of Jesus in the Gospels. Then you hesitate no longer. You use the great word of him. You call him God.

Did the disciples feel the wonder of this life, of these words and deeds as you feel

it? Again you go back to the Gospels. You watch the companions of Jesus as they follow him with growing wonder. He did not tell them who he was. He waited until they could tell him. He simply let them hear his words and watch his deeds. Day by day and month by month the impression grew. At last the disciples were on a quest for a word great enough to describe him. "Teacher" would not do. He was so great you could not get the meaning of his life inside that word. "Prophet" would not do. That word was too small for the significance of his life. At Cæsarea Philippi Peter was ready. He had found a word. He called Jesus the Son of God.

With us, as with the disciples, the road to the acceptance of the deity of Jesus is to open the life to the whole impression he makes upon us. Larger and larger this personality then grows until only one word is great enough to describe him. The Church has never been able to rest without this great word when it has spoken of Jesus. The testimony of the Christian centuries is that to feel the full impact of

his life involves the necessity of calling him God.

But to realize it fully—this the preacher well knows—a man must come with his own failures, his own struggle, his own outreach. It is as he studies Jesus in the light of these that he comes really to understand him. There is a moral as well as a mental element in the acceptance of the deity of Jesus, and, indeed, an emotional and volitional element too. It is as the whole man—mind, conscience, heart, and will—feels the meaning of the whole life of Jesus that a vital sense of his significance is really attained. Then it is that, shining bright and clear, the doctrine of the deity of Christ becomes one of the most certain facts of life.

Thinking thus, the preacher finds a mighty moral tonic moving through his life. With the Son of God as the center of his message he can face his problems, he can face the evil of the world, he can face the need of men. He dares to be a preacher because he has the Divine Christ.

CHAPTER V
THE DEED ON CALVARY

CHAPTER V

The Deed on Calvary

There is a perennial fascination about the cross. It attracts all sorts of people. It speaks to all types of minds. Its appeal is as manifold as human experience. It remains vital in every century, and is constantly relating itself in a surprising fashion to new and difficult problems which come fresh with the life of another age.

Calvary may be understood by any man anywhere as a revelation of heroism. Here was a man who went the full length in loyalty to his convictions. He did not merely risk life. He gave life, sealing the steadfastness of his purpose. When hostility began to close in upon him, he resorted to no indirection or subtle evasion or questionable compromise to save himself. He went on in the path of faithfulness with set face, and when faithfulness led to a cross he accepted even that. Calvary is rich in the quality of moral heroism. It is a sanctuary of high inspiration to moral

strugglers who are tempted to give up the fight.

The cross can be understood without difficulty as a revelation of faith. Jesus believed that his death would elicit a great response. He believed that it would become a moral power. He trusted the future. He trusted the moral responsiveness of men. When there was least responsiveness and most misinterpretation he boldly undertook the great adventure. He gave his life. That would rouse men. That would stir their sluggish consciences. What they had not been able to learn from his deeds or his words they would learn from his death. He was so sure of it that he took the risk. He believed in men. His death is a creator of moral faith in humanity.

The cross can easily be felt as a revelation of love. Jesus had courage enough to die. He had faith enough to make it clear that it was worth while to die. He had love enough to be willing to die. He so loved that he gave. The whole atmosphere of the life of Jesus is full of love. His death is a climax of love. In

him love ceases to be a sentiment. It becomes a compelling motive for action. Many men have played with love. Many men have discarded it when it made great demands. Jesus took love seriously. He put it in command of his life. At last it nailed him to the cross. His death is a great revelation of love enthroned.

Now, it is not hard to see that all this courage and faith and love must become a power in the life of men. Whatever an earnest man's view of the person of Christ, he cannot believe that Calvary counts for nothing in the life of the world. It has created courage. It has created faith. It has created love. What it reveals, it makes potent in the lives of men. It is a moral and spiritual dynamic in the life of the race.

When a man approaches Calvary with a deep appreciation of the uniqueness of the person of Christ, when he bows before him with a vital sense that he was very God as well as very man, new meanings emerge. Now he sees that the cross does not simply mean that a man once had triumphant faith and self-giving love. It means that

God believed in humanity. It means that God had infinite self-giving love.

Life is now lifted into transcendent significance. If God believes in humanity, how dare we doubt? If God so loves that only the gift of the cross could reveal the depth of his devotion, how regal a place love has at the heart of the universe! Faith and love have become transfigured. The doubter and the cynic are left without standing room in the system of things, for God believes and God loves, and such belief and love become a great rebuke of all men's moral failure. To fall short of a high moral standard is always a tragedy; but to be faithless when God believes in us, to be loveless in the face of such self-giving devotion—that were treachery and abasement indeed.

So Calvary becomes morally creative in a sense impossible before. If the Son of God so gave himself, that great sacrifice becomes such a power to set moving all high motives and righteous purposes as the death of no human hero could ever be. Calvary breaks through selfishness and finds

responsive love. It kindles a fire of nobility in hearts cold and heavy with evil.

Thus the vital appropriation of the doctrine of the deity of Christ absolutely transforms the meaning of the cross. It changes its practical results. It enshrines it in the mind and the heart and the will as it could be enshrined in no other way.

When a man comes to the cross with a vigorous moral sensitiveness further meanings emerge. To the man with conscience awake, sin is never a matter which can be treated lightly or taken as a matter of course. Righteousness is regal and can never be treated as a slave. The life of men is a vast tangle of sin and evil, and something must be done about that evil. Righteousness is alive in the life of God, and with all his love he must be loyal to that white flame of moral passion which burns forever in his heart. There are vast interests of righteousness to be guarded and cared for, and the God who is Master and Ruler of all must care for righteousness in all the vast reaches of the life which he has made.

When the supremacy of the moral dawns upon a man, he begins to see far deeper meaning in the cross. It is more than the memory of a man of courage and faith and love. It is more than the Son of God revealing the Father's belief in humanity and his undying love for the children of men. It has critical moral significance. It is the solution of a moral problem. God so cared for righteousness that it was necessary for God's Son to suffer all the tragedy—all the inner tragedy—of Calvary before sin could be forgiven. Calvary is a great deed honoring righteousness. It is not an evasion of moral demand; it is a satisfaction of moral demand.

There is no moral carelessness in the life of God. To all sentient creatures of all ages the cross stands as a symbol of the supremacy of the moral. It is a vindication of God's care for righteousness as well as a revelation of his love. On the cross you see the depths of God's care for that moral ideal which men have dethroned. It is a revelation of the conscience of God.

This looking upon the cross from the

standpoint of its moral significance is by no means exhausted when we have come as far as we have now journeyed. When a man's moral discernment is completely penetrating he looks to find more meaning yet in Calvary. That stinging, lashing conscience of his has been somewhat appeased by the thought of Calvary as the revealer and vindicator of the Eternal Conscience in the life of God, but it wants more. It still beats restlessly. If there is one spot in a man's experience where he cannot be contented with less than entire reality, it is when his conscience is relentlessly and morally awake. A voice deep within him calls for something deeper yet in the great sacrifice. And immediately it becomes evident that the apostolic interpretation found something yet deeper in the cross. The phrases, "a sin-bearer," "who himself bare our sins in his body upon the tree," "a propitiation for our sins," strike a profounder ethical note than we have yet struck. They may be figures, but they represent something deeper than a winning moral influence or the revelation

and vindication of a ruler of righteous passion.

At this point we must carefully guard ourselves from all crass and mechanical interpretations. We cannot make the cross a cold matter of commercial exchange. We cannot descend to unethical theological brutality in order to satisfy an ethical hunger. But we must affirm, and with right fearless emphasis, that in some deep and adequate fashion Christ did take our load upon him, that in a real and spiritual experience he bore the penalty for our sins. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

Whatever the various elements of the ultimate rationale of the atonement, this must be insisted upon. There are a hunger and a need in the life completely awake morally, which are satisfied only by the conception of a sin-bearer. And in our fear of unethical theories we must not run away from the central moral and spiritual verity of the cross—the fact that Christ did there in some genuine fashion bear the

weight of the burden of the world's sin and so made possible its forgiveness.

There is no conception which, when totally appropriated, so gives rest to a conscience heavy with the sense of guilt, none which proves so morally creative, nor about which all the energies of the new life can be so effectively organized, as this of the death of Christ as the achievement of our peace through the taking upon himself of our responsibilities.

When the sinful man can stand in the presence of the cross and feel that there the Son of God has actually solved his problem, has actually borne his burden, has actually made his woeful weight his own, and thus made possible the forgiveness of his sins, a great glorious sun of hope rises over his life and a great song of rapture is ready to sing itself in his soul.

We must be extremely careful to keep in our theology of the cross the secret of the cross's power. And at this point no one must be more careful than the preacher-theologian. He may say beautiful and true things about Calvary without ever striking

its distinctive message. The Jesus who is a man of courage and faith and love will inspire men. This much at least many a Unitarian has in his gospel of the cross. The message of the Son of God, who revealed the confidence of God in humanity and the love which God felt for his erring children, when preached with enthusiasm, will rouse men and give them new passion and new high purposefulness. The message of Calvary as the revealer and vindicator of God's righteousness will produce a moral fiber in the Church. But the full message of the Son of God as a sin-bearer, bending under the weight of the burden of men's sins—this alone goes to the root of men's need, satisfies the conscience, and becomes completely creative as a moral power in the life.

Calvary, then, is a great deed. It is a deed of suffering rescue. It is a deed of sin-bearing. So interpreted it is the moral center of religion. It is the citadel of Christian experience. It is the really defining thing about the Christian faith.

The preacher to whom this great truth

has become vital, can recognize and rejoice in a hundred other true and beautiful things about Calvary. But he knows that this is the supreme truth, the one which eternally matters.

When he confronts a man with a sense of blighting and devastating sin, with the lash of conscience goading him like a pursuing despair, he knows that only one word will go to the root of that man's woe. Calvary as the experience of a human hero will not touch his need. Calvary as the revelation of the love of God will rouse him, but it will not satisfy him. Calvary as the deed of a divine sin-bearer will give him everlasting peace.

CHAPTER VI
SALVATION

CHAPTER VI

Salvation

There were many roads which led to Rome. There are many paths which lead to the experience of salvation. There are strange windings and turnings, sudden ascents and ways through deep valleys, among the varied experiences through which men come at last to the peace of God.

We may make some observations about the various places where men touch the deeper demand and the way in which they follow it, and try at last to see what is involved in a full and typical Christian experience.

Here is a careless man. He is a man of exuberant physical health, and a hearty, intense bodily enjoyment of life. He goes swinging through the days, robust and full-blooded, a well-fed, well-kept, contented animal. If he were just a horse or a dog, that is all we would require of him. But hidden in his own life there is a demand waiting to make itself heard. In his heart

there is a voice which will one day speak. There is a turn of the road somewhere, a new angle of experience met, and so conscience springs forth full grown with its imperial demand.

Here is a man held tight in the clutches of some favorite vice. Year by year its grasp becomes firmer and stronger. For awhile he lives on scarcely thinking of the dualism of his life or the slavery which is staring him in the face. He is busy most of the time with the constant demands of a full, and it may be arduous, life. Occasionally comes the gnawing hunger for indulgence and the lapse from the everyday line of his activity. Then at last he wakes up to the meaning of it all. His whole life is being dragged down to the level of his lowest indulgence. The brute is devouring the man. In the agony of this realization he reaches out for help.

Here is a man who has taken human experience just as it has come and without asking any questions. He is fast becoming an efficient commercial machine. He is practically alert, shrewd, preoccupied with

affairs, and the voice of heart and conscience seem little heard in his life. But a fragment of a man cannot take up all the room in his experience without a struggle. Sooner or later the man of affairs hears a demand from a realm far different from his country of stocks and bonds. He faces issues he hardly knew to exist before. The call of the upper country rings in his ears. It is his day in the valley of decision.

Here is a man of full-orbed selfishness, living a life correct enough but very cold and calculating. He holds the reins of his life with a firm hand. The spirited steeds of his desires never get away from him. He is proud of his self-mastery. The hard, corroding currents of selfishness course through his veins unheeded. But the day comes when he makes a strange discovery. He had supposed that vice was sin. He learns that selfishness is sin as well. He examines his complacent, well-kept life and sees the poison of calculating selfishness everywhere. He goes into his plain of conflict, and if the victory is on the side

of the higher forces of his nature, he ends by crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Here is a man with a high ideal. He is always pursuing it. He is seeking the place where its rainbow colors touch the earth. He spends days and days in the quest. But it always eludes him. At last, footsore and weary and discouraged, he sits thinking over the sad tale of his failure. Then it comes to him that he must find a helper, if he is ever to succeed. And the moment when he begins to seek for a helper from whom he can receive the power to do what he so much desires, a new day has come in his life.

Now, in the various times of crisis which come to men as the higher demand breaks upon them, there is likely to be an emphasis on one of two aspects. One is the need of a satisfactory life, one is the longing for fellowship with God. One is a moral hunger, the other is a spiritual desire. One results in ethical passion, the other calls at once for religion.

When what a man desires is contact and

fellowship with the Unseen, when he sets out on a quest for comradeship with God, he is on the way to a religious experience. There is a great deal of religious experience in the world which is not Christian experience. Whenever a man looking up at the immensities of the night above him reaches out in deep self-giving and trust there will come to him a vague, beautiful sense of being at home in the universe. Whenever a man opens his life to the currents which play in upon his soul from without, a sense of being part of a great, full, rich organism of life will come to him. This is the source of the mysticism in many a religion. It tends to crystallize on the intellectual side into a pantheistic philosophy. It is as full of poetry as all the beauty of nature, and as subtle and as deep as the dim, vague longings of men. It is a religious acceptance of the universe, a homelike restfulness in the great mystery without, which has such strange kinship with the mystery within.

This type of religious experience is likely to be lacking in ethical quality, and may

in certain temperaments easily degenerate into sheer sensuous indulgence. It is the voice of one aspect of the life and not an answer to its total need.

When the crisis in a man's life is of a distinctly moral character the outcome is along different lines. The sense of failure and guilt and need is like the stabbing of sharp swords. The outreach becomes a quest for a religion, but the man is not looking for a comrade so much as a Saviour. He is not looking for a tender, mystical consciousness of oneness with all the deep life of things, so much as he is looking for the forgiveness of his sins. The intensity of his moral struggle gives him insight. The lash of his conscience frees him from the danger of self-deception. He will be glad to have all the rich and subtle and wonderful things which religion will ultimately offer. But what he must have is peace in spite of a sinful past. What he must have is deliverance from the evil which he cannot throw away from his life. What he must have is cleansed purposes, renewed life, and free access to a God who is not

only the Infinite Soul of things but is Righteousness alive.

Such a man can be satisfied with nothing less than a divine Christ. He can rest contented in no smaller solution of the awful problem of his sin than the deed on Calvary which made possible its forgiveness. There is a certain amazing correspondence between his need and the divine Christ who calls to him from the cross. Here is a deed which in all its spiritual agony has, somehow, caught the full ethical horror of his moral failure. He is told that this deed satisfies God, that sin can be forgiven. He does not have a philosophy of it. He would be at a loss to give a rationale of it. But some deep sense of the eternal fitness of things makes him feel that it is true. He decides to accept the great sacrifice. He decides to trust the divine Saviour. He takes a great leap of personal surrender, and self-giving, and dependence, and faith. He flings himself away forever into the arms of Christ. It is the greatest and completest personal act of his life. It is the moment of his conversion.

And in upon the man thus giving himself in personal commitment there comes a divine response. The intensity of it will vary according to the temperament of the man, but the meaning of it is always the same. Whether it is a cataclysmic upheaval of resounding joy, or the deep, still flow of a pervasive, calm peace, this is the heart of it: the Son of God will take care of him. He has accepted him. His sins are forgiven. All is well. He can look straight up into the eyes of God and be at peace.

Moving through all this joy of a dawning Christian experience there is a surging moral urgency. Peace has not come in such a way as to lessen moral demand. It does not lower the tone of the man's ethical life. It is a moral peace which sets him to work more eagerly than ever before, to obey the behests of righteousness. Only now he is not depending upon himself. Now he is depending on Christ. At one instant his Christian experience satisfies moral demand and makes him more eager about all moral things. It gives him rest without arrogant presumption, and zest

in moral tasks without the temptation to become a Pharisee.

This is the experience of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It centers in the great sacrificial deed of Christ. It goes out with a vitalized manhood to attack all the great tasks of life. Is there the labor of reform? Are there battles for the realization of brotherhood? Are there wrongs to right and higher rights to be recognized? There is no equipment for these tasks like the vitalizing breath of a Christian experience.

And in all these tasks the man who has found moral peace will remember that the same peace is the deepest need of other men. He will be eager for the sanitation of the slums. He will be even more eager for the salvation of the men of the slums. His trust in the Christ of the cross has set free such divine energies in his life that he knows that in such an experience is to be found the staying strength which is to keep men faithful and make them finally victorious in the moral and social battles of the world.

CHAPTER VII
THE GOAL OF SAINTHOOD

CHAPTER VII

The Goal of Sainthood

We have been thinking about the beginning of the Christian life. Now we are to think about its goal; or, to be more exact, we are to think about one of its goals. It has a goal for the individual and a goal for society. It has a goal as regards personal experience and a goal as regards the relating of this experience to every real and true thing in individual and corporate life. The goal directly along the line of the developing Christian experience is the goal of sainthood. It is of that goal, and the ways leading to it, of which we are now to think.

When a man actually begins the Christian life he has found two things. He has a new allegiance and a new enthusiasm. He endeavors to be faithful to the allegiance and to express the enthusiasm. The allegiance is to Jesus Christ his Saviour. The enthusiasm is the fire of love which was kindled in his heart when he accepted Christ.

Now the history of a typical Christian is a story of alternating emphasis. Sometimes it is the allegiance which is in command. A man does some things with an intense purpose of loyalty to his Saviour. He does them without much emotion. But he believes they represent Christ's will for him, and he sets his face flintlike to do them. Sometimes the enthusiasm is in command. There are some things which a man does in a glad, spontaneous devotion which fills his heart with music. He so loves Christ that he pours his affection out in eager deeds of service.

Just after a man's conversion—especially when the conversion has been characterized by a great emotional upheaval—the second type of activity, where creative Christian enthusiasm is in command of the life, is likely to be seen. But sooner or later the glow of rapture somehow slips out of the consciousness and the man finds his life an expression of personal allegiance rather than of uprushing enthusiasm. To be sure, the emotion returns. Many and many a time a man's hands spring to his task in

spontaneous gladness. Many and many a time words leap to his lips brimming with warm feeling fresh from his heart. But there are also many times when he has no particular emotion. And there are also times when his Christian activity is the driven loyalty of a set will, with no response in feeling at all, or with the feelings, like wild horses, all pulling the other way.

Now, both these types of emphasis are Christian. The man the basis of whose life is allegiance to Christ and the man the basis of whose activity is bubbling Christian devotion are both men of true Christian life. But the way of uninspired allegiance is a way of drudgery. It is a way of slavery. The way of warm enthusiasm is morally and spiritually creative. The life moves along with a triumphant swing of power. Christian living seems set to music.

As a man thinks of his past Christian experience he dwells upon his days of spontaneous enthusiasm rather than his days of driven loyalty. He delights to remember the days and nights when an inner light

seemed shining in his heart and an inner fire warmed all his life. He knows that then his words and deeds, fashioned according to the power of an inner inspiration, had a Christian richness unknown at other times.

About this difference in emphasis in Christian living there are one or two practical things to say. First of all, we cannot get away from the fact that we have a physical life. There are bodily reactions, complex and varied performances of the nerves, states of mind which are the shadow of physical states, and these must not be confused with real indications of our spiritual states. Then it is also true that it would not be wholesome for any man to live at white heat all the while. More than that, it would be quite impossible to do so. There is a kind of sentimental inadequacy which creeps into the Christian life when there is too much emphasis on the emotions.

But while all this is true, it must be added that the days kindled by high Christian enthusiasm represent a state of grace higher than those characterized by the dull

drudgery of driven loyalty. A man instinctively feels that it is more normal to obey Christ because he loves to do his will than to obey him because he ought to do it.

The goal of the Christian life is the period when days of loyalty have ceased to alternate with days of love, and all a man's life is dominated by the love of Christ. This is personal sainthood. It does not mean a perpetual high tide of emotions. Sometimes the feelings are as quiet as a lake in the moonlight on a summer's night. But even then there is a certain spiritual depth to the life which is different from a deed of driven loyalty. The activity is not the activity of conscious emotion, but it is the activity of love. Then, again, the flood gates of feeling open and a great consciousness of God's presence sweeps over the life. The deeds surge with the dynamic of a wonderful gladness surging through them. Love is now not only deep in the motive but possessingly present in the consciousness. Sometimes there are physical reactions and dire conflicts with nerves, but this storm on the surface of the ocean

leaves the depths untouched. The saint personally experiences the ocean of the love of God.

When we come to analyze closely we find that sainthood includes some further characteristics.

First. There is a certain ethereal purity of purpose. The saint's judgment may be confused. He may become perplexed and ignorantly fight on the wrong side in some great conflict, he may make all sorts of intellectual and practical mistakes, but his intention is nobly right, and this glorified rightness of intention tends to make his mind do the very best and most dependable work of which his mind is capable.

Second. He not only is filled with love to God and Christ, but he is filled with love to his fellow men. There is a certain deep personal responsiveness to human need which is a far finer thing than the zestful endeavor to be useful at the beginning of the Christian life. Training, environment, and other matters may interpose obstacles even now, but the heart has a deep hospitality for all human need.

Third. There is a constantly growing sense of the reality of the things of the spirit. God and Christ and the Spirit's work have a certain conscious and constant validity. They have become the most real and possessing matters in all the world.

Fourth. Deep in the life there is a steady and perennial drawing of energy from trust in Christ. The life has a great song of victory in it—the victory of a constant trust. Sainthood is not something with which the Saviour and his great sacrifice are remotely connected. It is the highest spiritual gift of the cross of Christ.

Most Christians have known what it is to have snatches of the experience of sainthood. They remember all their lives the glow and wonder of the experience. It gives them a standard and an inspiration which are of untold value. But Christ came not that people might have glimpses of sainthood, and that a few elect souls might achieve its permanent glory. He came that all his children might attain to that life where loyalty is lost in love, where a per-

fect motive and a full devotion crown all the days. It may be a far call to these heights, but it is toward these heights we are climbing.

If we ask how we shall know the way, there may be many things which are obscure, but there are some things which are clear. The deeper the consecration of a human life, the more it is really opened to the mighty work of the Saviour. Surely complete consecration is a door through which one must pass on his journey to this promised land. Then the deeper the realization that all spiritual grace is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the more in a subtle way is the life attuned to true receptiveness. The more a man fills his mind and heart with the thought of the creative grace of God, the more will it become feasible for God to do great things for him. And added to consecration and an appreciative waiting for God's great gifts there must surely be deep desire. A high discontent with less than the best God has to give must help to open the doors to the best. Blessed are all they who hunger

and thirst after sainthood, for the desire is a prophecy of the fulfillment.

So, giving ourselves more completely, believing in God's grace more deeply, aspiring with great personal longing for the triumph of love, we may work and wait and trust, and the God who desires to lead us each to the place of fullest Christian devotion will in his own way lead us to the heights of life.

It may well be that the man who has reached the table-lands of peace and love will be thinking little about what he has attained. God delights to deliver his children from self-conscious sainthood. The dweller on the heights is likely to be too much preoccupied with the love of Christ to have much time to think of himself. He is still pressing on, loving, growing, serving, passing into larger life and fuller experience all his days.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND THE REST OF A MAN'S LIFE

CHAPTER VIII

A Christian Experience and the Rest of a Man's Life

A Christian experience may become the dominant fact in a man's life. But it is not the only fact in his life. There are all sorts of other experiences and activities to which it must be related. The test of the wholesomeness and adequacy of a Christian experience is the way in which it organizes the rest of a man's life about it.

Sometimes it does not come to the position of dominance. It is a real and wonderful fact, but it dwells in its own apartment in the life, so to speak, and does not particularly care to associate with its neighbors. In this fashion a fatal dualism is introduced. The inspiration of religion becomes a sort of spiritual intoxication which is never related to any particular activity. And the active life sinks to a low level, lacking the inspiration and guidance which the Christian experience ought to give. It is only by becoming a motor

power that Christian experience is kept completely wholesome. Religious feeling becomes at last a vicious emotional make-believe unless it masters the rest of the life.

So the task of the man who has found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is to relate the energies of the new life within to all the rest of his thought and feeling and activity. It is of the very nature of the experience which has come to him to take this form. A Christian experience is an imperial thing. It goes forth to conquer all the life.

Immediately it touches and renews a man's relations to other men and women. It sweetens friendship. It takes away seeds of selfishness and calculation. It enables a man to be a better son, a deeper friend, a man of purer devotion in all human relations. It touches all the centers of his life and makes him capable of appreciating more and of giving more than he could ever give before. For the development of subtle and understanding sympathy, of steady and unflinching loyalty, there is no power like an applied Christian expe-

rience. All a man's human relations have a new quality and a new richness when he becomes a Christian. The love of Christ purifies all the channels of love in a man's life. As the years pass he may become a sort of expert in devotion.

Then a man's Christian experience touches and transforms his work. The mystic Tauler is said to be responsible for the saying, "An anvil may be consecrated and a pulpit may be desecrated." All the work of a fully alive Christian is consecrated. He is serving Christ at his desk, in the shop, in the field, on the platform—wherever his work may take him. With this sense of the sanctity of all human tasks he works with a new faithfulness. He is daily inspired to do his very best. He works with a new enthusiasm. His task has not only received dignity. It has been glorified. A Christian man's labor may actually become in a real sense an act of worship. He works with an earnest discrimination. Such lofty labor must not be soiled by unworthy methods or unfair dealings or unclean hands. The applica-

tion of his Christian experience purifies his work.

A man's Christian experience touches and transforms his play. His heart has been so influenced by the love of Christ that he is full of responsiveness to simple enjoyments. He does not need hot and highly seasoned recreation to give pleasure to a dulled palate. His conscience is at peace, and he does not need to seek wild and maddening pleasures to drown the voice of an inner unrest. His mirth is as spontaneous and glad as a child's. He has the greatest capacity for gayety without bitterness or evil of any man in all the world.

A man's Christian experience touches and transforms his relation to nature. It does not make a poet out of a man who has no temperamental responsiveness to natural beauty. But it does give a certain noble richness, a certain added fine flavor to whatever sense of the wonder of the world of ancient slumbering hills and gay whispering streams a man has in his heart. This world of awakening spring, of opulent summer, of autumns when nature appears

in dazzling robes, to be remembered through long winter days; the world of calm white snows with flowers slumbering far beneath —all this world is seen with new eyes of glad appreciation as a man realizes that it is God's world. All these beauties are so many thoughts of God. The same God who whispers peace in human hearts speaks beauty through all nature. So it comes to pass that there is something sacramental in the Christian thought of nature. Even its bluff, robust, vigorous phases tell something of the manifold aspects of the life of God.

A Christian experience touches a man's relation to art. It gives him a sort of impalpable intuition as regards its beauties. There is a quickness in turning from the hectic and the decadent. There is a sensitiveness to that æsthetic anarchy which, getting into a man's blood, may wreck his life. Beauty must not only be a matter of noble lines and color, full of all sweet subtlety of suggestion. It must be free from the heat which burns. It must have wholesomeness at its least, and it must

have noble inspiration at its best. A Christian experience clarifies a man's sense that what is bad morals can never be good art. This making ethical and spiritual of the æsthetic sense does not mean that a self-conscious, artificial, didactic quality comes into a man's judgment of art. It just means that with simple spontaneity he feels that a thing must be noble in order to be beautiful.

A Christian experience sets certain standards for all of a man's thought and mental life, and gives it a warming inspiration. The mind is to be used with zestful, hearty eagerness because it is God's gift for great purposes. The new life working in a man's heart finds its way into his mind with a scorn of intellectual sophistry and make-believe, with a passionate eagerness for candor and truth. It does not give a man a new mind, but it cleanses and uplifts all of his mental activity. And in some deep way it bears a wise witness to the fact that after clear and cogent thinking there may be more to be said. Life is larger than logic, and reality is a

completer thing than mental processes. So the Christian by virtue of his experiences ought to find it easier to use his mind as a trusted servant, and not to be mastered by any of its mechanical, mutinous moods.

A man's Christian experience relates itself to his physical life. His body has the dignity of a shrine. The man feels himself the guardian of a temple which must be kept clean and pure. So the test of all physical experiences becomes twofold. Do they lessen a man's sense of mental and moral values? If so, they must be discarded. Do they contribute to a life which is growing in all higher things? Then they have a real place. The physical is not to become an end in itself. It is to be the means for the realization of the moral and spiritual ends of life. So the bodily life is to be kept as vigorous and beautiful as possible, always being used as the instrument of nobler things beyond itself.

A man's Christian experience touches and transforms all of his activity.

> Our Lord is still the God of might,
> In deeds, in deeds he takes delight.

The Christian's love to Christ, his love to his fellow men, is to be all the while expressing itself in his actions. They are the concrete expressions of his Christian experience. There are some things he cannot do. As long as he lives he is discovering new implications of his Christian experience in this realm of his deeds. His activity saves his emotions from degenerating into sentimentality. His emotions keep his activity tuned to the quality of a noble inspiration. His daily life is a constant endeavor to coin his inner life into deeds.

So it comes to pass that there is literally nothing foreign to a man's Christian experience. It is to give new stability to his work and new zest to his play. It is to give added clarity to his thought and a new depth to his appreciation of all noble and beautiful things. It is to be the king of his activity, sending forth true, loving deeds to do its bidding all through his life.

In this fashion the spiritual life is kept human and human experience comes to feel the mastery of the spiritual. A man is saved from that delicate and over-refined

spirituality which has lost the salt of contact with all the real things of the life of the passing days. And the deeds of the bustling, busy man are freed from that hard and selfish secularity which is so likely to characterize them if the warming currents of a deep spirituality are not poured in upon them day by day.

Thus is created that fine product—so much finer than a dim-eyed, other-worldly mystic or a shrewd, hard-headed man of this life's affairs—a Christian of the world. This man is full of eager interest in all human things. He is in hearty and vigorous contact with the life about him. He is a comradely man of men. But he is also a man of the hidden communion. He is a man of God. He knows the meaning of those great creative energies which flow forth from Calvary. His inner peace, which sets the cross in a never-fading glow of light, is deeper than all the zest and interest of the passing days. It is what he has learned at Calvary which gives new adequacy to all his thought and new perspective to all his view of life. All his human

interests, all his experiences are richer and fuller and truer because in his own heart there is a perpetual memory of the death of Christ. Nature, thought, friendship, art, and activity receive their meaning from what he learned at Calvary.

CHAPTER IX
THE REGENERATION OF SOCIETY

CHAPTER IX

The Regeneration of Society

The Christian man has a new and creative experience. It moves on toward the great goal of sainthood. It becomes a life moving through all the aspects of his individual experience and relating itself to everything that pertains to the man's body and his mind, to his conscience and his heart, to his will and his activity. All this we have seen in our previous thought about the implications of a Christian experience.

We must now take a further step. The Christian life has a goal beyond the sainthood of the individual man. It has a goal beyond the complete mastery of his inner and outer life. That goal is the regeneration of society.

When we inquire as to the nature of the Christian program for the transformation of social life, the reply at first seems surprisingly simple. It consists in the statement of a few of the principles of the Bible. But their concrete application to

the varied aspects of the social life of men becomes a complex matter indeed.

The great words back of all adequate thought of social reform are righteousness and love. One of these words is the contribution of the Old Testament, the other the gift of the New. It was the prophet Amos who first pronounced the word "righteousness" so that lightning flashed through it. Speaking at the sanctuary at Bethel to a people who were religious but corrupt, he cried out, "Seek righteousness and ye shall live." He reënforced his message with an indictment of his people's sins poured forth at white heat, with a threat of future calamity which made the sky seem to darken. He remorselessly uncovered the evil of his people's life and let the light of God shine in on their vices. He was a living moral passion. His words were unforgettable, and after him prophecy was full of moral fire.

The word "love" in its full social meaning is the gift of Jesus. What he did, more than what he said, taught the world the meaning of love for the weak and the

failing. To be sure, he put it into speech: "God so loved . . . that he gave," and God's love was for a blighted world. The good Samaritan felt a surging compassion for a robbed and wounded traveler which had the very heart of the social passion in it. The owner of the vineyard who gave to those who worked but a short time wages they had no cause to expect, and insisted on his right to be generous, was an example of that uncalculating devotion which is to change the world. But, after all, it is the example of Jesus which creates the social passion. For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. Here we have the very essence of social consecration. We cannot be contented with comfort enjoyed thoughtlessly, with the mind and the senses and the tastes being ministered to while others are suffering painful lack. As long as society has plague spots and spots of dire privation we must labor for its regeneration. As long as wrongs are allowed to lift their heads we must work for the righting of wrongs. The social program

calls for the reign of righteousness and the reign of brotherhood.

In the name of righteousness the commercial world is invaded. The principles of justice must be made to rule in all the buying and selling of men. Whether it be in stocks and bonds, or the wool which comes from the sheep country, or the fruit and vegetables of the market gardener; whether it be the wood from the forest or the mineral from the mine, the bartering of men must be mastered by integrity and honesty and fair play.

In the name of righteousness the industrial world is invaded. The factory must be made sanitary, not as a concession to sentiment but as a matter of justice. Children must be kept out of employment which will dwarf and impoverish their whole lives, not merely because we feel tenderly toward children, but because children have rights and society has rights.

We have no right to deprive the child of a life of normal health and productiveness, and we have no right to deprive society of the output of a full and unwasted

life. The homes and the conditions of labor must be kept such as to make the worker as strong and efficient as possible. This is his just claim, and it is the just claim of society. The places where men live must be made and kept clean and suitable for the development of the fullest and most efficient life. Legislation must prevent any individual from doing harm to society by the place in which he lives or the place in which he allows another man to live.

In the name of righteousness the political world is invaded. The city whose government is a mass of corruption is a menace to every moral standard among its population. The country where votes can be bought and sold is sapping the moral vitality of its citizens. A man has a just claim to live in an atmosphere clean and charged with moral tonic. Municipal and national corruption spreads germs of ethical contagion everywhere. The whole political fabric must be mastered and controlled by right-minded men, working according to right principles.

Such methods of expressing and making effective the people's will as work most quickly and effectively and leave least room for the trickery of the conscienceless politician must be put in operation. Such sanctions as prevent sudden mob impulses from gaining quick control must be kept in place. The method and the activity of the body politic must be filled with a concern for righteousness.

The social life of men is invaded in the name of righteousness. There is to be a sharp and wise inspection of all social practices and manners, and those which weaken moral fiber, which tend to make the life effeminate and finally bad, must be put down. The amusements of men must be those which relax and not those which disintegrate. The pleasure which leaves behind seeds of evil is to be fought persistently and given no quarter.

Certain great evils are to be met in a combat of relentless antagonism. The intense nervous strain of modern life makes it more important than ever before that men should not come to depend on arti-

ficial stimulants. In sluggish days, when life moved with dull heaviness, it may have been less important to keep constantly in mind the dangers of intemperance. But in our day of constantly nerve-racking demand no man can afford to trifle with artificial stimulants for a moment. Life itself is overstimulating to multitudes of modern men. It will not improve the situation to make nerves overtaxed already the victims of narcotics. The battle against the habit of drinking intoxicants is more important now than it has been in any other time.

There are some forms of the expression of modern life and activity which must be watched with constant and penetrating scrutiny. The organization of great resources of wealth and the organization of great numbers of workers are inevitable results of the present conditions. Either of these organic masses of power may be a great servant of righteousness or a great servant of evil. When organized wealth becomes drunk with power it is the foe of society. When organized labor forgets the behests of

right, in its own lust of strength, it is also an enemy to the true welfare of men. The gigantic combinations of men must be mastered in the name of righteousness.

Then there is the social program of brotherhood. Of course it embraces all that righteousness demands. But it goes farther. It gladly gives itself in unselfish deeds for the bringing in of the day of brotherhood. It organizes institutional churches, where every need of human life is ministered to, in our great cities. It leads men to give their best years to the securing of playgrounds for children and wholesome environment for all. It goes to live among those who lack, to give them the blessings of those who possess. It seeks out the wide-lying countryside, often so empty of inspiration and fullness of life, and ministers to its need. It follows the pioneer to the wilderness, and the builder of a new life to the irrigated tract where he is making a home, always to minister and to bring fullness of life. It recognizes that the gift of personality is a greater gift than any other, and it pours out life itself

in years of glad service for the uplifting of men.

This social program in the name of righteousness and in the name of brotherhood seems overwhelming. Who is sufficient for these things? Who will go into the dangers and the hardships of the battle for righteousness in the commercial world through long and weary years? Who will fight against industrial evil, giving and taking hard blows in the testing conflict? Who will be steady under the ceaseless fire of hostility as he fights for political reform? Who will be brave enough to go forth to the battle for a social life which shall cast out all that soils and harms the world? Who will take up the old banner of temperance reform with a loyalty nothing shall daunt? Who will be the bulwarks of society against all the dangers which come from vast organizations of wealth and of men? Who will give life in the drudgery of endless devotion to small social tasks? Who will man the settlements, and work in the lonely countryside, and in the new West? How shall men be

given energy and devotion and undying faithfulness for these great tasks?

There is one answer. It is the men and women whose lives have been personally renewed by the grace of Christ of whom we have a right to expect that they believe without hesitation in the moral renewal of society. It is the men and women in whom the creative energies of the new life are at work, from whom we have a right to expect heroic faithfulness to all social tasks.

There is no deep gulf fixed between the evangelical and the social interpretations of religion. They belong together. A regenerated life is to work for a regenerated world. The men of social passion have a program. Evangelical religion furnishes a dynamic. When the two are united the transformation of society in the name of righteousness and brotherhood is not an impossible task.

CHAPTER X
THE FAR-FLUNG BATTLE LINE

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The Far-Flung Battle Line

The Christian man must face at last the need of the whole round world. His experience begins as a new power in his own life. It has its first battles to fight and its first victories to win in the arena of his own mind and heart. It moves forward to the complete possession of his motives and his thoughts and his activities. Then by an inner impulsion the new force which has come into command of his own life goes out to conquer society. Wherever there are evil to overthrow and good to enthrone in the life about him there is work waiting for his hand. All this is vastly important and wonderfully occupying. But the day comes when a man must lift up his eyes and behold the whole harvest field. Then he discovers that the field is the world.

Three important aspects of the world-wide enterprise which then confront him may be considered: first, its motives;

second, its methods; and third, its results. The motives of the world-wide enterprise are many. The very nature of a Christian experience is such that it wants to get out and express itself and fill the world. Life so bubbles up in the Christian, energy and richness of inspiration so possess him, that these things drive him out to give to others. He wants to share his secret with other men, then with more men, and so out over the world until there is not a man left who has not felt the wonder and the creative power which he has known in his own heart. Christian experience being what it is, the missionary enterprise is inevitable. The new life when conscious of its implications must go forth on the high adventure of conquering the world.

Then there is the motive which comes from a sense of the need of those dark, far-lying lands whose type of life has been formed apart from Christ. In some of them there have been wonderful gleams of beauty and moral aspiration, and the long tale of moral struggle has spelled itself out in great heroism. But what a sickening and

heartrending story of moral and spiritual need is the tale of the life of the nations which have not known Christ! Physical desire relentlessly let loose and issuing in manifold and beastly vices; the mind cowering under the lash of a thousand superstitions which make life a nightmare; the conscience heavy with its burden and beating dully under its weight of sin; the heart sinned against by cruelty and hardness until gentle and tender emotions are like exquisite flowers blooming in an oasis in a desert, with the burning breath from the wide-lying sands blowing upon them; the will without moral leadership to master it for high decision; the whole life bound and fettered and lying in ruins—all this in a world where Christ has lived and loved and suffered and died and risen again. The more we know of the world without him the more eager we are to carry his message forth.

Then there is the vision of what these people may become through the grace of Christ. A Christian experience makes a man a dreamer of dreams which are to

be realized through the power of God, and his fairest dream has to do with the transforming touch of Christ upon the life of all the nations of the world.

All this is gathered up and focused in the fact that the world-wide enterprise is Christ's own program for his followers. He has commanded us to go forth to all the world. The deepest thing in the life of a Christian is his personal allegiance to Jesus Christ. The Saviour is the Captain; he is the soldier. The Saviour is the Master; he is the slave. So the word of Jesus, "Go," is the blast of a trumpet sending him forth to battle. The whole meaning of his Christian life and its answer to the need of the world is gathered up in his response to the Master's command. The winning of the world is the great Christian task.

The methods of the world-wide enterprise are varied. At the heart of them all is the power of the personal touch. The hand pressed on the brow of pain and bringing the gift of healing has opened a way for the gospel in many a community.

Medical missions form a great letter of introduction which in country after country the missionary has presented with success. The teacher who opens the doors to all modern learning to the youth of the Orient is a powerful man in molding the future of his scholars. The drowsy East, rubbing its eyes and beginning to be eager to learn the secret of the West, heeds the schoolmaster who comes as the advance agent of modern scientific knowledge. When he is a schoolmaster in the things of Christ as well, a great light indeed shines in on the minds and in the hearts of his scholars. The evangelist with the winged word of personal testimony is a world-wide power. The man whose message focuses the history of his own soul speaks with a kind of authority which compels men to listen. The story of the cross, coming from a life full of its power, is simple and ineffably sweet and possesses a power to draw and master men. The personal touch of physician and educator and evangelist must be supplemented in great and laborious ways. The patient industry of the translator brings

the Bible into the speech of men. Thus the word of God is spoken to them in the tongue full of all the clinging memories of childhood. The garnered wisdom of Christendom must be poured out in books in all the languages of men, the harvest of the past must be brought to their doors. While translators and authors busily ply their pens at all these tasks, the buzzing presses in many a mission throw off their great masses of printed words to be scattered over all lands until the last man is reached. The varied social ministries which answer to all the true and real things in human nature must be carried on, so that the labor of Christendom shall be varied enough to answer to every legitimate human outreach for knowledge, for work, for pleasure, for hope, and for love.

All these varied ministries must be performed with some real understanding of the men and women who are to be reached by them. Patient and loving study results in a knowledge of their thoughts and their ways, and the good things about their lives, and what are the doors which will open

to friendship and confidence and love. The approach must be made with infinite delicacy and tact and sympathy. So through men's own thoughts and customs and friendships shall we be able to lead them to that which overwhelmingly transcends anything that they know.

The results we are seeking from the world-wide enterprise are many and diversified.

The first is to give all men and women everywhere an opportunity to know Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. This is an even vaster task than it seems at first. It is not merely to preach in the presence of all human beings. It is to preach in such a way that the need of the gospel is felt by the hearer. It is to preach in such a way that the adequacy of Christ stands forth clearly and cogently. It is to preach in such a fashion that the vital claims of the message come home to the heart and conscience of the hearers. Only when men really feel the vitality of the gospel message can they be said actually to have heard it. Only then have they had an adequate

opportunity to know our Lord as a personal Saviour.

The second result of the world-wide enterprise is the gathering of those who become Christians into some organic fellowship where they may be trained and guided to the appropriation of all that the Christian life has for them, and to the most efficient service. The joy of the missionary when he sees the light of the love of Christ and the gladness of salvation shining in the eyes of those to whom he has preached is one of the great joys of earth. As a convert stands forth, with living words confessing Christ and the salvation he has found, the missionary is ready to exclaim, "On this rock will I build the Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But these men who have found the Saviour—this fraternity of salvation in a heathen land—will need patient guidance and wise instruction for many a day and many a year. There will be formed the native Church, the second result of world-wide enterprise.

The third result is the effort of the

native Church. It in turn is to become an agent of evangelism—the most effective agent of all. It in turn is to become a schoolmaster of its own nation in many things, and most of all in the things of Christ. It in turn is to produce medical ministers to the need of men. The whole labor of the missionary is to become the labor of the native Church.

Through all this and beyond it there is to come a fourth result—the leavening of Christless lands with that common stock of Christian knowledge and sentiment and activity which is one of the greatest possessions of Christendom. The whole atmosphere of heathen lands is to be transformed. The common ideal of the nations is to become Christian.

A fifth result is to be the operation of all those forces for the regeneration of society on the mission fields which are now at work in Christendom. Commerce and political life, as it develops, and all the busy activities of men are to be studied and grappled with and mastered in the name of Christ.

So the great goal of world-wide Christian effort comes in view. That is the making completely Christian of the life of the world. Thought and feeling, will and activity—all of these are to be taken captive in the name of Christ.

Christianity begins with a saved man. It ends with a saved world. It occupies the range of the individual life of the man. It goes forth to occupy the whole life of society. There is nothing foreign to it. There is no human life it would not master and no human activity it would not control. This, then, is the meaning of the world-wide program. This is the goal of the world-wide adventure. It is a noble dream far beyond our power of realizing. But the mastery of the planet is not too much for the power of Christ.

CHAPTER XI

THE CEASELESS MINISTRY OF THE HOLY GHOST

CHAPTER XI

The Ceaseless Ministry of the Holy Ghost

Men have a great ally in their battles for righteousness. That ally is the Holy Spirit. When they hear his name it sounds strange and mysterious and far off. They suppose that it has to do with raptures foreign to their experiences and ecstasies beyond their attaining. It is true that the Holy Spirit has to do with the sunlit summits of Christian experience. It is also true that he has to do with the practical life of men. There is no human being who has not heard the voice of the Holy Ghost.

Before approaching this diversified and potent ministry we may well remind ourselves of one or two fundamental convictions about the Holy Spirit which come as a deposit out of the great Christian past. The first is that he is God, working with all the authority and power and finality and adequacy of the divine. Of the Holy Spirit, as of Jesus, we may affirm that he

is "very God of very God." The second is that he is a separate Person from the Father and the Son, having his own center of consciousness and feeling and will, although all these persons are bound together in the great unity of the divine life. Of this more will be said in the chapter on the Trinity. At present we content ourselves with the affirmation—crystallized from the New Testament and Christian consciousness—that the Holy Spirit is a great Person in the divine life, in a real sense separate from the Father and the Son, while at the same time he shares with them in that fundamental oneness of life which makes the Godhead a unity.

These two convictions may be said to be the skeleton of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. If we keep them in the background of our minds, our thought will have a certain Christian robustness and adequacy which is not possible without them.

Now, the great fact about this third Person in the blessed Trinity is that he has immediate access to the inner life of

every man and woman in the whole world. He works through the processes of a man's own life, where he is, in the great battle against evil and for good. He always assumes the point of view of the man in whom he is working. He is a constant urgency making that man feel that he ought to do the thing which he knows is right. He gives an added impetus to every good motive and opposes the evil motives in the lives of men. He is the conscience of the race, crying out in every human heart that there is a right which ought to be obeyed. In the terms of a man's own life and thought he speaks to him. He does not call from without. He urges from within. His voice seems the cry of a man's own best self. Adjusting himself to every strange and subtle meaning and experience of a man's life with perfect sympathy, the Holy Spirit presses the man in the very path of his own life away from evil and toward good. This is a world-wide ministry. It goes on under the sanctions of every religion and every lack of religion. It works through every language and cus-

tom and type of human life. Wherever there are men and women who can think and feel and do, who can love and suffer and act, the Holy Spirit is present as the intimate companion of the soul. In every battle a man fights against evil he has the reënforcement of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and at the very center of his life the Spirit urges him toward the battles which will dethrone what he knows is bad in his life and enthrone what is good. This is the patient, self-effacing, race-wide activity of the Spirit of God.

But this by no means exhausts the work of the Holy Ghost. In fact, this is only an introduction to a deeper work. Sooner or later God's Spirit brings each man and woman to the critical battle. He is not content with being an ally always ready to reënforce in the moral battles. The time comes when he brings on the battle. He leads a man to the place where he must face his personal responsibility and decide. There is no coercion which interferes with a man's freedom. The only coercion is in the fact that a man is forced to use

his freedom. He is not overmastered in such a fashion that he must decide in any particular way. But he is forced to decide *somehow*. He is held in the grasp of the moral omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, and in the hour of crisis he must make up his mind and settle his personal bearing. He must say "Yes" to the best and "No" to the worst, or "Yes" to the worst and "No" to the best.

In this supreme hour of crisis God's Spirit does not ask a man what he believes. That is not a question which is fundamental enough. He does not ask him if he is orthodox according to the standard of any faith. It is perfectly possible to be orthodox and bad. Instead of being asked what he believes, he is asked *what he means*. Deeper than all his thoughts, deeper than all his creed, what does he mean about life? That is the great question. It is the fair and final question. And the answer to it, when all the intention of a man's personal life is gathered into the answer, settles a man's destiny.

So God's Spirit brings a man to the place where he must decide for or against the best he knows. Here, again, the Spirit assumes the point of view, even the prejudices of the man. He is perfectly fair to this human being whom he holds in his great grasp. Whatever his religion, among the great ethnic religions, whatever his training and environment, the Holy Spirit presses this question: "Will you be loyal to the best you know? Will you put it in command of your life? Will you follow it unflinchingly? What will you do with it? Now you must decide!"

It is at the point of this struggle that the probation of a heathen who has never heard of Christ, or of any man who has never felt the complete compulsion of the claims of Christ, is decided.

With all that he lacks—and how poor he is without the knowledge of Christ!—he can still *mean* good and not evil, he can still decide to follow the best he knows. When he does that it is the moral equivalent, on the human side, of conversion.

No human being who lives to maturity

can escape this hour of strategy. In it personality becomes most kingly. Every power of the life is focused on the great issue. The man decides.

It is possible to decide against good and for evil with deep personal intention. It is possible to decide to refuse to follow the best one knows and deliberately to follow the worst one knows. It is possible to *mean* evil. It is possible, not because of ignorance or moral confusion, but just because one wants to do it, to choose the evil, and like it and make it one's own. When with deep personal intention, in the hour of final personal crisis, a man gathers up all the energies of his life and intentionally and decisively decides for the evil and against the good, he has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. All the pressure of divine love short of coercion has been thrust upon him. The resources of God have been gathered in a final attempt to lead the man to right decision. In the man's heart, deeper than opinions or creeds, God has put the great question, and the man, with no subterfuge or evasion,

has said: "I mean evil. I like it, and I want it." That decision cuts the root of reality in a man's life. It severs him from God.

Of course it is possible for a man to think that he has committed this sin of sins when he has not. A bold and daring delight in evil may blacken many days, and yet it may be true that the battle at the citadel of a man's life has not yet been fought. Much of the territory of his life has been devastated by evil deeds, but there is yet a Gibraltar of deep personality where the battle has not been waged. But some day the fight at the citadel is fought, and in that day if evil conquers, all is lost. The man has slain goodness in his own heart.

On the other hand, anywhere in the world a man may decide to mean goodness. He may decide to follow the best he knows. Dark superstitions may bewilder him. Strange faiths may have mental lordship over him. Still he may decide to follow the gleam of brightest light which he sees. A man may make that

decision with all his might, so that it expresses the very deepest meaning of his life.

Now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit a wonderful process sets in. It may be described as the way of pilgrimage for the growing moral man. The great decision has been made. The man goes out to live in the light of it. And this thing happens: At once his sense of what he ought to be and what he ought to do begins to grow. It may have been very small at first, but it grows and grows until it fills the sky. A man's moral ideal becomes so vast that it overwhelms him. (Compare Professor Curtis, in "The Christian Faith.")

At last a man makes a strange and sad and bewildering discovery. He can never satisfy the demands of his own growing moral life. His own nature asks more of him than he can do. His own moral sense has become a tyrant asking him to perform the impossible. At the very moment when his life is aflame with ethical intensity he faces despair.

The meaning of all this is not far to

seek. The man is standing on the border land between morality and religion. The Holy Spirit, working from within, has led him to this spot. Morality consists in trying to perform the great ethical task by one's self. Religion is trusting in some deity for help. And the hour when a man sees that he cannot do the thing alone is the great hour when he looks up and cries out for God.

In many a land the reigning religion does not offer a man what he most needs in this great hour of strategy. Then a wonderful thing may happen. In some dim, beautiful way the sense is borne in upon the struggling man that, somehow, somewhere, what he means and is trying to do will be taken account of. "All that the world's coarse thumb and finger failed to plumb" will be recognized and valued. He can trust that his struggle is observed and that he will not at last be left alone. It is a soft whisper of peace. It is the approach to a Christian experience which a moral struggler who does not know of Christ may make. In a way it is the

spiritual equivalent of the divine side of conversion.

Now, we come to the great Christian work of the Holy Spirit. Although it is true that he adjusts himself to the actual state of the inner life of every man and woman in the world, is their ally in every moral fight, brings on the battle when they decide what they mean about life, leads men to moral vision where they see that they can never perform the task alone, and whispers a sense of divine encouragement in their most despairing hour, it remains true that his full and complete and most fruitful work can be done only in connection with the facts and truths of the Christian religion. The moral battle can be fought with mental and ethical clarity when the moral intensity of the Hebrew prophets and the leaders of the Christian faith throbs in a man's blood. When with a vision of the blazing righteousness of God a man faces life, the Holy Spirit can do great things in his heart. His own sense of failure is sharpened into all the moral adequacy of a conviction of

sin. The very roots of his moral life may be reached by the shaking sense of moral failure which now comes to him.

At the borderland between morality and religion it is only by meeting Christ that a man can find the deepest peace. It is the God-man, winsomely human, yet God in the flesh, whom a man can trust with the completest moral commitment. And when the consciousness of sin cuts like sword thrusts, it is only the Christ of the cross who can speak complete peace. The Holy Spirit intensifies a man's sense of sin, then he fills his heart with the wonder of the deed on Calvary as a deed for him; and as the man trusts the Christ who died for him his heart is filled with beatific peace. There is all the difference in the world between the vague hope which the Holy Spirit can whisper into a heathen heart and the triumphant rapture of the dawn of the Christian life.

From the beginning of a true Christian life on through all the days the Holy Spirit is a guide from within. He uplifts Christ, his will, his lordship; he leads the

life toward that triumph of love which is the goal of sainthood; he inspires the Christian in his relating of his Christian experience to all the other experiences of his life; he energizes him for all social service and the working for the regeneration of society. He sends him forth as a sharer in the great task of the winning of the world. He is the companion of the missionary and the ally of the Christian worker. He makes worship potent and prepares human hearts for the eager words of those who would win them. Ceaselessly, constantly, and pervasively he works as the power in the human heart to bring about the triumph of the Christian faith. He seeks to enthrone Christ in men, in institutions, and through the whole range of life. The dynamic of religion is the mighty ministry of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN TASK

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The Church and the Christian Task

We may think of the Church in a number of different ways. Approaching it from the standpoint of the new life, we may think of it as the company of men and women whose lives have been vitalized by its currents. Approaching it from the standpoint of the great redemption, we may think of it as the company of men and women who have accepted and made personal the message of the cross. Approaching it from the standpoint of the teachings of Jesus, we may think of it as the society of men and women who accept those teachings as authoritative and are seriously endeavoring to follow them in the practice of their lives. Approaching it from the standpoint of the deity of Jesus, we may say that the Church is that body of men who in genuine and vital fashion accept the Lordship of Jesus. Approaching it from the standpoint of ecclesiastical organization, we may say that the Church consists of those bodies

of men and women who have associated themselves together as the historic expression of the Christian faith. In these approaches we will find two points of emphasis—an inner and an outer. On the inner side are belief, conviction, and experience. On the outer are the affiliation with some organization and the practical activity of the life. All this goes to show how complex and rich a thing is the Christian Church. You cannot get its meaning and mission into a single sharply turned epigram.

From the standpoint of the preacher-theologian the most natural approach to the thought of the Church is through the necessities inherent in the Christian task. The Christian task is the making Christian of the life of the individual, of society, and of the world. It includes an inner experience and a new type of life for the race. Now, this great task obviously cannot be accomplished by isolated individuals, however devoted, and able, and illumined by the Spirit of God. Organization is necessary for any decisive impact upon the

world. But it is also true that by its very nature Christianity is more than an individual thing. It knits men into brotherhood. It not only organizes the varied forces of a man's life into unity. It organizes various men into unity. It creates a social solidarity.

Now, as an expression of the social solidarity which Christian experience creates, and to make possible decisive impact upon the life of the world, the Church has its place. Historically, the Church was the creation of Christian experience and the means of the farther spread of that same experience. The visible Church was brought into being by means of the Church invisible.

The center of power in the Church in every age is right at this point. It is full of outrushing Christian energy just in proportion to the number of men and women it contains whose lives have been renewed by the vitalities of the cross. And this represents one great ideal of the Church. To bring every church member to a participation in the transforming and

energizing power of a redemptive Christian experience is one of the great aims of the preacher. At the same time it has always been true, and it is particularly true now, that the circle marking evangelical experience and the circle including earnest church members are not synonymous. There are multitudes of loyal followers of Jesus to whom the gate of a typical Christian experience has not yet opened. They belong inside the Church. There is a great ministry to be performed in their behalf. They are often of a practical serviceableness and efficiency which cannot be spoken of too highly. But they do not represent the most significant pulse of the Church's life.

Then there are those who have all sorts of intellectual difficulties, but who are willing unhesitatingly to accept the practical leadership of Jesus. They belong inside the Church. The Church has a great work to do for them. They are often men and women of the utmost usefulness. But they too are apart from the Church's center of inspiration.

There is another group within the Church without any right to be there. The Church never intentionally opens its doors to insincere men. It invites the tempted. It invites the fallen who desire to rise. It invites the wicked who desire to become good. But it does not invite the unrepentant. Yet the unrepentant enter. The deliberately evil who intend to remain evil become a part of the Church's organization. The tares grow among the wheat. This happens in spite of that legitimate function of discipline which inheres in the Church. Only an atmosphere tense with earnestness and rebuke for evil tends to reduce this phenomenon to a minimum.

These are the elements which go to make up that organized body which is to be about the Christian task. Some important observations may be made about the state of the Church when one of these groups is in command. When insincere men become dominant in any church, it is like the laying of a hand of death upon it. Even when the extent of their duplicity is not known there is a chilling and numbing

atmosphere about the life of the church which comes from them. All the fine and beautiful characteristics of church life, which come to bloom and fruitage in an atmosphere of sincerity and earnestness, begin to languish and wither. The name of the church is left, but its power has departed.

When the leadership of any church and its type of emphasis come from sincere men who have accepted the guidance of Jesus, but are perplexed by many mental difficulties, two phenomena emerge. First, there is an atmosphere of fine endeavor to serve in useful ways about all the church's work. Second, there is lacking in the church's worship and life that compelling note of authority without which a church can never be most efficient. There is much generous liberality of spirit. But that high commanding authority which must speak itself at the heart of a great church is unheard.

When the leaders of a church are men of great and zestful eagerness in all things, who have not entered the sanctuary of a typical evangelical experience, another situation is found. There may be a vigorous

and insistent orthodoxy. There may be no end of splendid Christian service. But a certain creative warmth which the vital experience of the evangel brings is lacking. The fireplace is there. There is plenty of just the right kind of fuel, but it has not occurred to anyone to light the fire. So there is a chill everywhere. In this atmosphere the best work can never be done.

When a church is led by those who know the secret of the cross, when its commanding leadership devolves upon those who have the peace of the great evangel surging in their hearts, a condition is found which deserves our closest attention. This church has dynamic. It has creative power. It has outreaching life. Men whose sins have been forgiven through the grace of the Christ of the cross, and who cannot forget that most significant fact, whose rich and glowing experience is built on it, give tone and color to the life of the church. A great spiritual richness belongs to that church. It is a place where a man's soul may wake and grow.

Such a church has room for earnest

Christians who have not yet entered into an experience which is typically evangelical; it has room for men and women of intellectual difficulties who are willing to accept the practical leadership of Christ. But its life is dominated by men of the evangel.

It is a church of this type which is ready with genuine efficiency to enter upon the Christian task. It is a place where individual decisions are made for Christ. It is a place where men find the peace of the cross. It is a place where the richness of a Christian experience becomes their possession. It is a place where the central Christian experience is related to all other facts and experiences of the life. It is a place where men and women are guided to the goal of sainthood.

This church is interested in all sorts of social and community service. It takes up all the useful activities of the institutional church. It becomes a center for the social and moral and intellectual life of the community. It works for sanitation, for cheery childhood, and for all wise reforms. It impresses itself upon the community as a

power that makes for righteousness. It is like a human body with a brain for all mental activity, hands and feet for all work and service and eyes to see all beauty. But the heart of it is the gospel of the cross. The throne room of this church's life is the possession of the Saviour.

This church casts its eyes abroad upon the world. On continent after continent it sees the fields white with the harvest. It sees the vision of a world won for Christ. It girds itself to help in the carrying out of that vision. The missionary impulse thrills through it. In prayer and study and giving it consecrates itself to the need of the world.

This church touches life wherever there is need. It has the utmost richness and variety of life. It has the utmost skill and adaptability in service. And the inspiring source of it all is found in the creative energy which has come into the life of men as they have accepted Jesus as a personal Saviour.

CHAPTER XIII
THE GREAT COMPANIONSHIP

CHAPTER XIII

The Great Companionship

The door which opens into the life of prayer is not far from any man. Through many different kinds of experience men are led to open it. Sometimes a sorrow comes across the pathway of a fresh, eager life. It is a new experience, this clasping of the hand of pain, and in the midst of it a man reaches out beyond the suffering to the God of all, seeking comfort and help. So the door is opened and a man learns to pray.

Sometimes a storm of disappointment breaks suddenly on the life. There have been fair, high dreams. Now they lie shattered, and a bewildered man looks on the wreck of his hopes. In this hour the instinct to seek the comfort of God makes itself heard in his heart. He cries out in the tragedy of his disappointment. And so he learns to use the language of prayer.

Sometimes sickness brings a great pause in a busy, restless, constantly occupied life.

The years have been so full that there has been no time for quiet, brooding thought. Now the heavy, unoccupied hours give much time for meditation. A man discovers a great empty place in his life. He thinks of how much he has missed of the touch of God upon it. Very softly he turns the knob and opens the door that leads into the way of prayer. He learns its meaning and its power and its joy, and he remains forever a man of supplication.

Sometimes aspiration leads a man to pray. He has great desires for his life. He wants his manhood to be rich and strong and efficient. A lofty ideal hangs out on the horizon beckoning him. He feels very small and weak in the presence of the thought of all that he desires to be and all that he desires to do. He wants a great Helper. He opens the door of prayer and begins to learn the great secrets of its ministry.

Sometimes it is the heart's own hunger for the sense of God's nearness which leads to prayer. Man is made for this high fellowship, and in his soul there calls

a desire which will be satisfied only with the sense that God is near. The outreach after God crystallizes into definite petitions. A man so learns the habit of prayer.

Sometimes it is a sense of sin which leads a man to prayer. He is weighed down by a disastrous sense of moral failure. He has not been faithful to his great dream. He has not been true to the best he knows. He has trifled with life. He has loved evil things. He has done evil things. He has sent words winged with wrong thoughts out on a career of evil. He feels a blight upon his life. He needs forgiveness. He needs revitalizing. He needs power to succeed where he has failed. Only God can help him. Driven by his dire need, he opens the door of prayer. He calls upon God for forgiveness. He begs for some force to make him strong. He prays for the power of moral victory in his life. So he learns the meaning of prayer.

Through whatever experience a man comes to prayer, it is made into deeper and fuller meaning through the guidance of Christ. To begin with, Jesus as he

speaks and lives in the Gospels makes all spiritual realities more mastering and vivid. Then Jesus gave prayer a place in his own life which is full of suggestion. To listen to the prayer of Jesus is like going to a school of devotion. And Jesus gives a man a great confidence in prayer. The more complete a man's sense of the unique glory of the Human-life-divine, the more adequate a man's sense of the meaning of Jesus for the world, the more does prayer become feasible, sensible, potent, a great constituent part of life.

Calvary is a creator of prayer. You cannot easily pray to any sort of a God. But the heavenly Father who gave his Son as a great sacrifice of moral love draws prayer from us. We dare to come to him with our sins. We are willing to come to his infinite tenderness in our grief. We are glad to bring to him hope and discouragement, and all the varied experiences of life. We know that he will understand. We know that he will care. And we know that he will help.

The heart of prayer is companionship

with God. It does not begin as companionship. It often begins as a need with no language but a cry. It grows into companionship. That is the goal of prayer.

There are three aspects to the great companionship.

The first is companionship with the thought of God. Of course there is an abyss of fullness in the thought of God of which we know nothing. There is an infinite ocean of divine knowledge which is quite beyond us. But we may know some things about the thought of God. And we may know them quite surely and certainly. That is the very meaning of revelation. God has made himself known. He has caused us to understand some fundamental and eternally true things about himself and his thought of life. Now, prayer has as its mental aspect the entering into sympathy with the thought of God as it has been revealed to us. The great truths of the Bible, the mighty messages of the prophets, the fructifying and creative words of Jesus, the great interpretation of Christ's life and work which come from Paul, all the knowl-

edge we have of that divine truth upon which our hope rests—this is all taken up into the life of devotion until it becomes a part of the very fiber of our spiritual life. Prayer is not devotion without ideas. It is great ideas enshrined in a worshipful life, which is filling itself with the very thought of God.

The second aspect of prayer is that it is entering into companionship with the purposes of God. Here there is a volitional element in prayer. It makes demands of the will. It sets in motion the buzzing wheels of the activity. It becomes a dynamo by whose energy great deeds are made possible. It is a personal appropriation of God's program for human life. Here, again, the Bible has a rich and noble ministry. Here the past of Christian experience and history pours out its treasures. Here in personal surrender a man grows in consciousness of the will of God and makes that will his own. God's purpose for his own life as he can see that from the principles of the New Testament and the expanding life of the Church is to be

understood and loyally accepted. God's purpose for his friends is to be deeply felt, and a man is to seek eagerly for its accomplishment. God's purpose for his community, as Christian principles come to control it, is to be taken as a standard for whose realization he is to work. God's purpose for the life of the nation is to be brooded over, and as it shines out clearly, a man's consecration is to be given to helping in its realization. God's purpose for the world is to loom out like a mighty vision and in loyal commitment a man is to give himself to the assistance of all that makes for its accomplishment. Prayer thus is a great captain of the will, giving a man vast and noble tasks to which he is to commit himself. As in deep devotion he seeks to know the will of God and to consecrate himself to it, he is entering into companionship with the purposes of God.

The third aspect of prayer is companionship with the passion of God. Here we come to the great emotional element in prayer. After sympathy with the thought of God, and commitment to his purposes,

the life is to enter into some companionship with the high intensity of love which broods over the world with yearning for its salvation. Calvary is the revelation of the passion of God. The Lord of all loved as much as that. He was willing to suffer as much as that. And Christians are to know something of the companionship of the cross. As God experienced the great outreach of suffering love, so his children are to share in that outreach of yearning longing.

Here we come to the significance of intercessory prayer. A man comes to feel something of the meaning of the passionate desire of God to save his friend. In that hour when his heart is full of a sense of his friend's need and God's desire to save him, he prays for his friend. He has taken the burden of that friend upon his own life. He bends beneath the burden and he prays.

The need of the Church comes home to an eager Christian. The infinite resources of God are ready for its using. And God is ready to pour them out. The burden of

the Church's need, the appreciation of what it might become through the grace of God, and of what he is longing to do for it, comes upon a man's heart, and he prays.

The need of the world is made real to a man. He sees the vision of its helpless sinfulness. He sees the glorious future God is ready to give. He sees the influence of redemption making every human desert blossom as a rose. He feels the weight of the world lying heavy upon the heart of God. He feels it lying heavy upon his own heart. The unfathomable love of God seems like an infinite heartache struggling with the sins of men. The tragedy of all this, the glory of what may be, fills a man's heart, and he prays. For his brother, for his Church, for the world, he has prayed the great prayer of intercession. He has entered into companionship with the passion of God.

A great sense of God's care for his own life, of the Infinite Heart that has time to feel a pang for his failure, and joy in his victory, comes to a man. In some great hour the ministry and the death of Christ

are made real as for him, God's gift for his salvation. It is an hour of infinite humility. It is an hour of infinite hope. He comes to understand that passionate love which does not lose sight of him among the multitudes, but cares for him. And in this realization a revelation of the meaning of his own life and a revelation of the heart of God comes to him.

So prayer at last lifts the plane of a man's life to the place where in some real sense he thinks God's thoughts after him, where in definite consecration he makes God's purposes the program of his life, and where a real passion for the triumphant achievement of the great redemptive purpose moves through his heart. He has entered into companionship with the thought, the purpose, and the passion of God. And thus he has come to the very fullness of the life of prayer.

CHAPTER XIV
CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

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Christian Stewardship

The theory of Christian stewardship is an important part of Christian thought. The practice of Christian stewardship is a most important matter in Christian activity.

The beginning of stewardship lies in the fact that we owe life and all we possess, and the world in which we live, and everything about it, to God. He made it all and in that sense we owe it all to him. He constantly sustains it all, and in that sense it is a constant gift from him. If we had originated anything, we might talk of actual ownership. We have originated nothing. We receive everything from the bounty of God.

All this is the basis for a great religious stewardship. It is only a part of the basis for specifically Christian stewardship.

The typical Christian is a man who owes everything to the cross. His conscience has found rest there. He has there found deep repose in spite of the memory of hated

sins. The great energies of the new life have been set free in his heart as he accepted the Christ and the message of Calvary. Everything which makes life full of meaning and opportunity and richness and infinite hope comes from the cross. It is the profound sense of everlasting indebtedness to the great Sacrifice that makes the deepest motive for Christian stewardship. Life is to be lived, talents are to be invested, everything is to be done in the light of the cross. Into this sense of the mastery of all life by the great redemption is brought the added sense that because of creation and the constant upholding of all life by the presence of God, it all belongs to him. So stewardship is a matter of ownership thrice enforced. By creation, by the sustaining of the world and life, and by redemption, God is the owner of our lives and all that we possess.

We are stewards of our bodies. With all the intimacy of association which makes them seem very life of our life, they do not belong to us. They are just loaned to us. They belong to God. We are to use

them for him. The defilement of the body is not the misuse of what is our own. It is the destruction of the property of God. The body is to be kept and used and reverenced as a wonderful piece of God's workmanship, made by him, sustained by him, and made most sacred by the fact that God himself in human life used a body, looked out of human eyes, and spoke with human lips. The sacredness of the body and God's ownership of the body are never to be forgotten.

We are stewards of the mind. Here we come to something more intimate and personal than the body. Even here we cannot say "Mine." God has made our minds. No mental activity would be possible without the present sustainment of God. And this mental life of ours has new vistas of meaning which open before it since the great reconciliation of the cross. Our minds are to be used for God. They are the servants of God. Our thoughts belong to him. All the subtle, winding processes of our mental life are to be mastered by him. When we keep thought clear and honest and

reverent, and urgent and richly responsive to all noble things, we are exercising Christian stewardship in the realm of the mind.

Our emotions belong to God. Surely nothing seems much more definitely our own than our feelings. But God holds the secret of our emotional life, even as he holds the secret of our mental life. He made this organism with its capacity for feeling. He continually keeps it in activity. The great work on Calvary has one of its supreme outcomes in the cleansing and making completely healthful of the emotional life. Christian stewardship in the realm of the feelings consists in refusing to be driven into action at the call of any unworthy emotion, of so keeping the manhood, like a soldier who always fights under a noble flag, that by this very process the range of the emotional life will be made high and righteous.

We are the stewards of our wills. Here we may be inclined to hesitate. Is there nothing which is our very own? The will is the last citadel of the personality. If it is surrendered, all is gone. The answer is

that all must go. There must be nothing left. All belongs to God. Stewardship which does not include the surrender of the will to God misses the very central implication of our being God's possession. The capacity for deep personal intention is God's gift. The act of volition is impossible apart from God. The will is the very fortress whose mastery is one of the great results of the work on Calvary.

> Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them thine.

It is the central purpose of the life without whose possession God is never content. When life is a constant endeavor to make our lives a response to God's will, and our wills the expression of his purpose, then we are realizing the meaning of Christian stewardship in the realm of the will.

We are stewards of our activities. What we do is never done merely by our own effort. Every deed is possible because we live in a world God has made for deeds, and because he helps us at the moment of our activity.

Some deeds disintegrate and some upbuild. Calvary is the great creator of noble deeds. By creation, by God's present cooperation in our activity, and by redemption, our deeds belong to God. This means that the commanding principle in our activity is to be the carrying out of the purposes of God. As we accept the great salvation, as we apply the new life to the whole circuit of our own lives, as we work for the regeneration of society and the winning of the world for Christ, we are realizing the meaning of Christian stewardship in the realm of action.

We are stewards of our possessions. It is not merely that a little of what we have belongs to God. All we have belongs to God. He made it all. He keeps it a part of our experience. The experience of new life which he has given is a kind of occupancy of us by God which demands the consecration of all our possessions.

What we use of our income for the sustaining of our bodies, for the support of our families, for the upbuilding of our minds, for the enrichment of our lives is a part

of our Christian stewardship. What we give to the Church as the organized representative of Christ's kingdom, what we give to great benevolences, what we give to the mighty enterprise of mastering the world for Christ is also a part of our stewardship.

Now, a practical question here arises: What proportion of our income can we legitimately devote to the completion and upbuilding of our own lives as the servants of Christ, and what proportion should be directed immediately to the great interests of the Church, of benevolences, and the world enterprise?

Here we meet the challenge of the ancient Jew. He gave at least a tithe of his income in the direct and immediate way of religious investment. With the light of the gospel shining upon us we can scarcely do less than did this ancient Jew.

But our great motives are not to be found in ancient Israel. The thing which is to kindle our sacrifice is to be the sacrifice of the cross. That which is in our mind as we decide what shall be used for the Church benevolences and for the great world

enterprise is to be the love which, though it was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through its poverty might become rich. At the foot of the cross we are to decide about our gifts.

Of course we need to be systematic in our giving. The minimum should be determined and as carefully followed as a definite amount is adhered to in any business transaction. For ordinarily situated people the tithe is a most convenient and proper minimum; for a man of wealth of course the minimum should be far greater than the tithe.

Then, after this minimum, the leaping heart full of the love of Calvary will often give larger gifts. There must be this place for spontaneous giving. Christian stewardship must never be so interpreted as to rob our practice of the glad and sacrificial surrender of love.

And we must keep in mind the principle already laid down that we are the stewards not only of what is directly given to the purposes of the kingdom. We are stewards of all that we possess. We must

use it all in such fashion as to express our loyalty to God, and to his great purposes, and in such fashion as to secure his approval.

All that we are, all that we think, all that we feel, all that we do, all that we possess belongs to God. We are trustees of God's property in respect of all these things.

We must remember, however, that God does not desire us to have a slave's sense of being property. We belong to God, to be sure, but we belong as sons and not as servants. The defining thing about Christian stewardship is that it has a noble element of spontaneity. It is like the feeling of a son toward his father. It is not mechanical. It is not calculating. It is based on natural right. But it is glorified by love.

Christian stewardship is the stewardship of love. God owns us because he created us, but our loving sense of this changes it from a hard, cold fact to a noble inspiration. God owns us because he sustains our lives, but love makes this a joyous companionship of spontaneous appreciation. God owns us because Christ died to redeem us

and save us from the destruction of all which makes life precious. This kindles our devotion until in return we would give whatever Christ desires. Stewardship is based on the rights of God. It is transfigured by the spontaneity and eagerness of a great love.

CHAPTER XV
THE GOD OF THE PREACHER

CHAPTER XV

The God of the Preacher

The preacher's doctrine of God is not merely a set of great ideas. It is not simply a formulation of ultimate conceptions. It is not simply a major premise back of all his thinking. It is more than the last refuge of his logic and the point of departure for all his thought. All this the doctrine of God is to the preacher. He does not seek for a Deity about whom he cannot make any definite affirmations. He does not fail to see that the mind must find a resting place in its thought of God. He takes many a train of thought which leads to the conviction of the necessity of the Deity, and he constructs his doctrine of God with all possible mental care. He sees no way to account for rationality without God, and the very validity of the rational process he finds at last buttressed by faith in a rational God. But while all this is true, the God of the preacher is something much more immediate and con-

vincing than a necessary conception. He is more than an influence. He is an experience. This is what makes him the God of the preacher. You can talk about an influence, but you can proclaim an experience. The preacher has something to proclaim.

First of all, the God of the preacher is a Person. The preacher can appreciate those vague elusive moods of companionship with the vast unseen which go to make up the religion of the pantheistic poets, but to him religion is something very much more concrete and definite. It is the experience of fellowship with a person. God is the great companion. He knows. He loves. He wills. It is the touch of this Infinite Knower, and Lover, and Master of Will upon his life which gives content to his thought of God. The very essence of his experience is the consciousness that the great Lord of Life thinks and understands and cares. Without this sharp sense of a Person who hears and answers, religion would lose its deepest meaning. The preacher goes to his pulpit driven by the

compulsion of a personal relation with a personal God.

Two corollaries of his experience of God are worthy of emphasis. His God is the God who is Creator and sustainer of all that which exists. This assumption moves through and enriches all his devotion. There is not another God somewhere who is the real source of things. There is not another God somewhere who is the real sustainer of life. This God—his God—the God of his prayer and companionship—is the Author and upholder of all. Without this conception his experience would be impoverished beyond recognition. Then the God of his experience is the Infinitely Near. He is the vital power in all that which we experience as part of life. Transcendent as the Author and Master of all, he is immanent in all, the real potency in all the activity of life. This conception is part of the richness of the inner experience, of the brooding consciousness of the constant presence of God everywhere. It is not simply the religious utilization of an intellectual conception. It is a part of that full-orbed

piety which blooms out into conceptions of its own.

The God of the preacher is a God of complete and perfect knowledge. All reality is open to him. Of all that is he is cognizant. The vast whirling system of things is ever the possession of his thought. The minutest experience of the minutest form of life is known to him. Every human life is read by him. He traces all thoughts down the dim corridors of the life to their spring in the motives and intentions of men. He sees all deeds. He hears all words. He knows not only what men do but what they mean by what they do. Full of awe and full of joy is the thought of the perfect knowledge of God.

Then the God of the preacher is a God of flaming ethical life. The voice which cries "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" in the heart of the preacher is the voice of God. Conscience is God articulate in the preacher's life. The categorical imperative is the imperative of God. The preacher's experience of God is an experience of nearness to an ethical burning

bush. He must take off his sandals because he stands on holy ground. And the fundamental thing about this consciousness of God as ethical is that it places the source of all things moral in the nature of God. It is not simply that God commands righteousness. It is that God is righteousness alive. It is not that there is a moral law to which God conforms. God is the moral law. All the things of righteousness are thus given the highest possible dignity, and the nature of God is seen in its true character as the very source of the moral distinction. This ethical flame which runs through the preacher's experience of God gives a new emphasis to his life and his preaching. It sharpens his speech to a moral demand vibrant and compelling like that of the Hebrew prophets. He has stood with them in the place where he has seen the vision of God as a moral fire, and this experience gives a note which is a constant part of all his thought and speech and activity.

The God of the preacher is a God of infinite love. When he uses such a phrase

as the "heart of God" he is not using idle words. The God whom he has met in the solitude of his deepest experience is a God of infinite tenderness and yearning, suffering, outreaching love. He has seen the face of God in the face of Christ. And Calvary has forever stamped upon the portrait of God which hangs in his heart the wonder of sacrificial love. His God cares for his world and suffers for it. There is a divine heartbreak over the sin of men which Calvary has made known and which reveals the depths of the love of God. The preacher has stood before Calvary in his deepest experience of the presence of God, and, standing there, he has welcomed to his heart the infinite forgiving love.

The God of the preacher is a God with boundless richness of life. Every valid human experience is the symbol or echo of something in the life of God. The world about us is full of the sense of him. Heaven-kissing mountains and quiet, peaceful valleys hidden among the hills tell something about God, for they are the

thoughts of God. The wide, heaving ocean, and the far-lying, bright shining stars are hints of the variety and richness of the life of God, for they too reflect his thought. The man with a personal experience of God appropriates all nature and interprets it in the light of that experience. He finds in human life at its best many a hint of the divine, for it too is God's workmanship, and in all varied types of thought and speech and life he sees a reflection of the versatility of God. Even in such human characteristics as the sense of incongruity and the feeling of the laughter of things he sees some hint of a cosmic humor. It is only in sin that he sees that which is utterly foreign to the nature and character of God.

With all this richness and diversity of life, this white-glowing righteousness and tender, yearning love, the God of the preacher is a God whose life is organized into perfect harmony and unity of meaning. The total life of God, every part fitting into every other part, is a great organic harmony. It is this total life which is ex-

pressed in the acts of God. It is this total life which Calvary satisfies. The cross is the expression and satisfaction not merely of one of the attributes of God, but of his total life in relation to sin. This expression —this getting into deed of the total character of God as he faces sin's tragedy—is the central spiritual meaning of the great expiation.

So the preacher's experience of God grows and deepens until it touches all of his experience and all of his life. Does his mind cry out for a final resting place? He finds it in the adequacy of his thought of God. Does his conscience cry out for a master and a friend? He finds the answer in the ethical nature of God and the moral discernment which is central in God's own life. Does his heart yearn for love in the soul of all things? This yearning is answered to by the God whose very nature is love and whose undying tenderness has been revealed on the cross! Do a thousand dim and varied senses of meaning to be found in life cry out for a place back in the ground of things? The thought of the

infinite richness of the life of God answers to this longing. God is not the intense, accentuated, eternal existence of simply one or two qualities, however great and important they may be. Every real and wholesome thing in the life of the universe has some basis in the life of God. Does the life marred and broken by sin call for a great reconciliation? The sense of God's infinite life in all its relation to sin being so expressed on Calvary as to satisfy God himself, and all this done in such a fashion that when a sinful life finds oneness with God again there is no dark past able to frown it into despair, comes with infinite calm to the soul.

The God of the preacher is an intense, rich, perfect personality, the consciousness of whom becomes more and more mastering in the preacher's life. Mind, conscience, heart, and will find satisfaction and energizing in the experience of contact with the living God.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

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The Practical Value of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Is the doctrine of the Trinity a part of the structure of the ship which carries us? Or is it a strange, heavy cargo of whose use we have not the slightest notion, but which we carry in a large compartment in the vessel none the less? In this age, with no particular gift for metaphysics, there are a good many people who would probably say that the historic doctrine of the Trinity represents so much useless cargo which would better be thrown overboard; and among the doctors there are doubtless those who would agree with almost as emphatic a putting of the matter as this. With the urgent practical demands of modern life upon us, why should we encumber the Church with a metaphysical dogma which nobody understands and which proves a stumbling-block in the way of many earnest minds?

The preacher-theologian hears such stric-

tures as this not without sympathetic understanding. He knows what eagerness about the practical matters of the kingdom of God is behind them, what sincerity, and fine desire to put no unnecessary burden on the mind of the Church. He hears with comprehension, but he is in no haste to join the voices lifted in depreciation of the historic position of the Church as regards the Trinity. He knows that our age very much resembles the disciple Peter in its habit of speaking out before it has realized all the implications of its speech. It would be better to wait and ponder and be sure. If we were to discard the doctrine of the Trinity, we might discover that we had lost more than we knew.

There is something very appealing in the thought of the infinite richness and fullness of God's life. But how is it to be secured? Is a lonely Only One in the awful isolation of eternal silence the God of a rich and varied life? When we stop to think of it our theism seems to prove too much. It gives us unity. But if we are not watchful, it will give us a blank and awful loneliness

which is the very opposite of all we need to find in the God back of this infinitely varied world and the rich experience of companionship in which the Christian knows him.

Here at once we find a point of contact with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Christian conception of God is not a hard and rigid type of theism which at last reduces the life of God to an empty stare. There is one God, but there are three centers of consciousness and volition and love in the Divine Life. There is unity of fundamental being. But there are three centers of divine experience. There is perfect ethical harmony. There is complete metaphysical unity at the base of all. There is similar completeness in the knowledge of each of the Persons of the Godhead. There is a distinction among the three which we express by the term "Father" when we refer to the basic center of personal life. And yet each is eternal, and together they live the infinite, beatific life of the Deity.

Now, doubtless there is much mystery

here, and doubtless it will be easy to raise verbal problems. But some important considerations must be remembered. First: Our aim is not to comprehend the Trinity. Of course the life of God must contain mysteries we cannot unravel. And a mystery you cannot explain looks like a contradiction. Second: Our task is not to explain God, but to explain everything else. The proof of the doctrine of the life of the Godhead lies not in the fact that it is made completely clear to finite minds, but that it is a key which fits every lock, a final truth which explains the world. Not What academic fault can you find with it? but How does it work as a key to life? is the penetrating question. Not whether we can explain this mystery, but whether it makes clear other mysteries, is what we desire to know. Not How much light can be thrown on the Trinity? but How much light does the Trinity throw on everything else? we must ask.

So the test is really a test which the preacher-theologian is particularly fitted to make. Does the need of our thought and

life drive us back to the Christian conception of the Trinity? Does this conception eventuate in creative thought and fuller and more adequate life?

We have seen already that the richness and variety in the life of the world is best answered to—no, may we not say, only answered to—by a richness and fullness in the life of God. And this the doctrine of the Trinity gives.

But let us go deeper. One of the most defining aspects of human life is its social expression. Men belong in social groups. Family life and friendship are essential characteristics of humanity. The town, the state, and an infinite variety of social groups are the inevitable expression of human nature. The great goal of the seers and dreamers of men is a social goal. The dream of brotherhood is one of the most priceless possessions of the race. Each life is to be a part of a vast sum of life to which it contributes all that it can give, and from which it receives all that it can assimilate. This represents a social ideal which seizes our minds with a mastering strength. Now,

where does the social instinct come from? What is the source of the social dream? What is the basis of that sense of human solidarity which is more and more taking possession of our minds and hearts?

Does all this simply represent a wonderful thought of God, or does it come from the very nature of God? Did God just think it out when he was planning for man, or is it a reflection of the actual character of the Divine Life?

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity affirms that there is an actual social life in the Godhead. An eternity of social experience is the story of the life of God. Forever and forever the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have lived in the infinite felicity of perfect love. The social dream, then, has its basis in the very life of God. The man who would have society become an organism of brotherhood, who would have society made into mutual self-giving and love, would have the life God has made become like the life of the maker. A perfect social life among men will be a reflection of the perfect social life in God.

All our social instincts, then, have the deepest possible basis. When a man feels his heart go out to a friend, it is some divine echo of the perfect fellowship of the life of God. When a human home is built about the altar fire of tender love, it is a symbol here among men of the perfect and eternal home life of the Trinity. There was a perfect home in the life of God before there was a thought of home among the children of men. When men turn from selfishness to brotherhood, when they give themselves to high altruistic service, again one hears the echo of that which is a deep reality in the nature and activity of God. The brotherhood of the Church, in so much as it realizes God's plan of loving and sacrificial fellowship, is another expression of that which is perfect in God's own life. The great goal of society, a perfect brotherhood with evil cast out and love enthroned, will be a final answer in human experience to that which is deep and real in the life of God. Every meaning and quality of the social instinct call for that which the doctrine of the

Trinity gives to us. A social world demands a social God.

But even the individual Christian experience needs the Trinity. The heart of individual Christian experience is the sense of the love of God. But a loving God must be a God who is actually loving. Did God's power to love slumber until man was created? Then love is not an eternal and essential characteristic of God. Was God eternally active in loving fellowship—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—an eternal activity of love? Then the love which touches the Christian heart is indeed an expression of the very life of God. With nothing less than this can the Christian be satisfied. Such a conception is implicit in Christian experience.

The individual man with an empty heart waiting for the discovery of the love of God is like a weary wanderer approaching a brightly lighted house. Within is warmth and within is joyous fellowship. His heart warms as he sees through the windows the picture of fine fellowship within. To

the perfect fellowship of the Divine Life the soul of man is drawn. It is not a Divine Hermit who is Master of Life. The human pilgrim is called to come to the heavenly home.

A new sense of the solidity and ultimate triumph of all social aspiration is given by such a view as this. In a world of jarring selfishness do men dream of brotherhood? The dream will come true, for it is already as real as the life of God. The prophet of brotherly love is not the tuneful singer of a day which will never come. He has not woven powerless words into sweet but impotent music. He is not an erratic visionary carried captive by vain and impossible imaginings. His truth is as solid as the life of God. That which he has seen in vision God already is, and men must become. He has the future on his side. He has the Master of Life on his side. The basis of all that he says is the very nature of God.

Turning to his New Testament, the preacher finds a current of thought and experience in relation to God which could

only eventuate in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In the great intercessory prayer he finds that Jesus placed the basis of the unity and brotherhood of the Church where he has placed it—in the nature of God—"that they may be one, even as we are one." The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit appear distinctly in the New Testament, yet all the while there is the clearest consciousness of the fundamental unity of the being of God.

All the preacher's speech and ministry is enriched by his conception of God as triune. As he looks out on his own day, with its seething social passion, he sees in this very ferment of the aspirations for brotherhood something he can connect with his deepest thought of God.

As in prayer he looks up to the heavenly Father in the joy of the great companionship, he has a deeper, richer experience, because he believes that God has been a Companion forever. Fellowship is no new quality of God. It is the experience of his very life. As the preacher dreams his own dream of brotherhood and self-giving

love he is strengthened in his faith as he remembers that he too is desiring that men may be what the Divine Life already is—a conscious and active union of perfect love.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PREACHER AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

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The Preacher and Religious Authority

The preacher must have an authority which masters him. He must speak with such authority that he masters other men. Sweetness and light are very important characteristics of religion, but power is more fundamental. The imperial religion is the only religion which can really answer human need. There is a sense of absoluteness and of finality without which the voice of religion becomes impotent.

Now, how is the preacher to find this note of commanding authority? How is he to find it for himself and how is he to find it for others?

Sometimes men are tempted to try to be authoritative by being assertive. They substitute dogmatism for assurance. But the authority of powerful lungs, while it may be insistent, is not very convincing. The authority of noise is a power which wanes and finally disappears.

A man may try to find his authority in a water-tight logical system. He seeks an interpretation of life which by its perfect fitness and harmonious articulation will command his assent. Now, no doubt much valuable work may be done along this line. But some important observations must be made about the result. All logical processes go back to some major premise, unless one is reasoning in a circle, and, at any rate, there is a great assumption at last. The whole splendid structure rests down somewhere on what must be taken for granted. So the ideal of a system with perfect proof everywhere breaks down. If conviction is to rest on a reign of absolute logical proof, it is an impossible dream. Then this logical structure, when it aspires to the completion of the interpretation of the whole life, requires a will to believe before it becomes in any way commanding. Logic must be supplemented before it becomes a very real thing in a man's life.

In the third place, this world-view as an influence lacks driving power. It may be correct enough as far as we may see.

We may not feel inclined to criticize or disagree. But the view as a set of logically arranged conceptions is not dynamic. It has no creative power. It lacks mastery. Formal logic, though a most useful mental instrument, can never give us a really compelling authority.

Sometimes a man tries to rest in the authority of an institution. Here is a venerable and august ecclesiastical system which claims the right of commanding the whole circuit of a man's religious life. It has made itself felt in the terms of many a civilization and language and clime. It comes to the man with a passion for infallibility and offers him an infallible Church. A good many people are fascinated by such a conception of authority, and not a few find no little rest and content in it. The difficulties which this kind of authority meets are, however, of a very grave character. To begin with, it involves a surrender of personality. The right of individual mental grapple, the right of individual conclusion and conviction, are given over for the sake of uniformity and a settled and

undisturbed point of view. The result is not mental peace. It is mental stagnation. What is given is not a vital authority, but a tyrannical authority. Then the historical expression of the Church's life, with all its advances and retrogressions and right-about-faces, is anything but a confirmation of the claim that the Church is a steady rock of Gibraltar, and offers a mastering and really authoritative word to men. If you believe in the infallibility of the Church, you must do it in spite of the facts rather than because of the facts.

Sometimes a man tries to find an æsthetic basis for authority. The beautiful to him becomes the commanding. A noble ritual is the deepest secret to him of the Church's power. A religion of taste is the goal of his desire. A commanding architecture, the appeal of noble music, and great and ancient phrases draw him with an indefinable allurement, an inexpressible charm. There is a real place for the ministry of beauty in religion, but when this is the Church's only authority and religion's greatest sanction the life lacks what it most

needs in a time of moral crisis. The love of beauty and the love of gratified emotions and pleasurable sensations are not far apart, and these latter may easily degenerate into vice. Your apostle of good taste too often turns out to be a voluptuary. A mere sense of the æsthetic values of life has never been able unsupported to keep men morally clean.

Right here comes the man to whom conscience is commanding. He sounds the demand of the categorical imperative in our ears. The might of the ethical "Thou shalt" is the most authoritative thing in the world to him. Conscience is the king of life, and we must obey its high behests. There is much to be said for this doughty champion of the voice of moral command which rings in all our lives. Several difficulties, however, emerge here. The first is the failure of this inner sense of the potency and kingliness of righteousness to crystallize into an adequate point of view and its tendency to work out into the complexity of a thousand tiny moral demands as intricate as a Chinese puzzle.

Conscience is very much alive, but let alone it is likely to be a tree full of leaves, but with no adequate fruit. When we examine it closely we find that conscience is rather a sense of the need of an authority than an authority itself. It is the throne room of the soul. It is not the king sitting on the throne. Then the deepest experience of the race shows clearly that it is not in moral activity, but in some deeper thing that the great word of commanding peace is found. Conscience makes a man a pilgrim seeking an adequate authority, but it does not know how to guide him to the shrine.

Sometimes men try to find their authority in a mechanically correct and infallible book. Of this we shall have more to say in the next chapter. Here it will be sufficient to state one or two principles which run athwart this conception.

First, the authority of a mechanically correct book would be the authority of a perfect set of rules. To be adequate it would need to cover every possible individual situation with a concrete demand. Of

course such a book would be impossible, but, second, it would be a bad thing to have it if it were possible. The servile obedience to a complete rule book, with no other discipline than turning to the proper page, would dwarf the life of every man who lived by it. Personal struggle, personal thought and expression, all the richness of a noble individual life would be impossible. A terrible and destructive gift to any race would be a perfect book of rules.

Where, then, is a man to look for an authority, and what are the marks by which he is to know it when it is found? The answer is that the truly authoritative is that which speaks with vital compulsion to a man's whole life, to his mind, his conscience, his heart, and his will, that which satisfies the outreach of every aspect of his life, and that which is mighty enough to organize all his life into efficacious and harmonious activity. That which speaks vitally to all of a man's life and proves creative in all the ranges of his experience and activity is the truly authoritative.

With this conception of authority the

preacher approaches the Christian religion. Wherever he meets it he finds a vital voice, and when all it has to say has been heard every aspect of human life and experience has been spoken to.

Suppose he comes first with his mind. The view of life Christianity offers, its Lord who has created men and redeemed them, its sense of all that is, as immediately dependent on an infinite and august and perfect Person who is the great Master of Life, its lifting of the meaning of existence above the plane of the thing and finding a personal interpretation of the problems of the universe, its going back not to such figures of speech as ultimate forces, but to ultimate personal life—all of this speaks to the highest ranges of the mental life with a certain power to give noble satisfaction.

Of course it involves assumptions, but this mental authority is not the authority of formal logic, but of a point of view so noble that it cannot be surpassed; and it is to be immediately supplemented and reënforced by the other compulsions exer-

cised by that religion of which it is one aspect and expression.

Suppose a man approaches the Christian religion through his conscience. It speaks morally rousing words like unto no other words of moral intensity in all the world. A moral fire always burns at the heart of the Christian religion. The behests of righteousness are enthroned in its life. But there is this curious strategy in the moral compulsion of the Christian religion: it gives peace to conscience at the very moment that it recognizes its demands. Conscience has a way of becoming a dreadful, lashing tyrant. Christianity keeps all its power, but delivers us from all its tyranny. It gives a man moral energy without leading him to despair, and moral faithfulness without making him a Pharisee. It makes him humble at the moment when he finds moral freedom, and spontaneous and eager instead of slavish in obeying the behests of righteousness. All this it does by giving him a Friend instead of a law to obey, a Saviour instead of a stinging past, and leading him in the way of trustful obedi-

ence instead of the way of passionate, self-dependent activity. Nowhere else is conscience made mighty and yet kept from being a producer of havoc and despair as it is in the Christian religion. Here alone is conscience made the friend of man. And herein lies the moral authority of the Christian faith.

Suppose a man approaches the Christian religion through his heart. Nowhere else is there a voice which speaks to the heart of man as does the voice from Calvary. Grant that the Son of God suffered there, grant that he did it to save the race, and such love as we have never dreamed of is there poured out upon the world. The heart of God is full of love for men. The love of God gave the gift of Calvary. The heart of God suffered infinite pangs for us. The voice of that self-giving love speaks with a finality and compulsion to the heart of men. The heart finds its master and its ultimate allegiance in the Son of God who gave himself for our redemption.

Suppose a man approaches the Christian

religion through his activity. He is busy about great and noble tasks, but he is eager to find the most noble tasks and inspiration for their achievement. Nowhere else does he find such a program of activity as Christianity offers. Nowhere else does he find such inspiration in carrying out its behests.

It is not simply in one of these approaches that the authority of the Christian religion is to be found. It is in all of them put together. It is in the way in which Christianity speaks to the mind and the conscience and the heart and the will. It is its impact upon the whole life. It is in the way in which it can organize all the forces of the life into efficiency and keep them moving at the highest standard of activity.

But all this is not merely something to be seen from the outside. It is something to be experienced from within. A man feels the urgency and the vitality of all this outreach and downreach and summons of the Christian faith. He stands on the brink. He has enough to justify a great

leap of faith. He has enough to justify a great act of will. But that leap of faith and that act of will must be made ere the final place of certainty is reached.

Then from within a man sees the meaning of the Christian faith. Then from within he knows its peace and final authority. The compulsion of an abounding life slays all doubts and satisfies all demands.

This personal certainty is augmented and welded into new solidity by social reënforcement. Every other Christian is an added strength to the man who himself has found peace in Jesus Christ. It is as a great social solidarity of saved men that they have found an unimpeachable authority. This consciousness of the corporate life of men with a common experience is the driving power on the human side of the Christian religion.

The test of authority must always be a pragmatic test. How does it work? Does it produce a fragmentary life or a complete and well-rounded manhood? Does it speak to a part of the nature at the expense of the rest, or to the whole full-orbed

life? Does it organize all there is of a man into the most he can become?

Measured by such a test, Christianity emerges triumphant. It speaks to all the life of a man. It speaks to all the life of society. It gives satisfaction and expression to everything vital in the individual and to the larger fellowship of the race. It has an individual goal and a social consummation. And it is a dynamic to bring these things to pass. The authority of Christianity rests at last in its triumphant vitality.

No man has more cause to rejoice in this conception than the preacher. It answers the needs of his own life. It answers the demands of his ministry. His message is one of authority, but not one of tyranny. It masters men, but never enslaves them. At the hour when it compels their allegiance it sets them free.

CHAPTER XVIII
THE PREACHER AND HIS BIBLE

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The Preacher and His Bible

The preacher is a man of men. He is a man of practical activity. He is a man of books. He is eminently a man of one book. That book is the Bible. In this chapter we want to say something of the preacher and his relation to the Book which is the literary dynamo of his ministry.

What the Bible can be to the preacher depends to a remarkable degree on the conceptions the preacher has of the Bible. It must manage to adjust itself to his preconceptions and even to his prejudices. It does not have a clear field and no favor. The preacher may force the Bible to speak to him through such forms of thought about it that it is forever impossible for the full ministry of the Bible to be realized in his life.

A man may come to the Bible as a perfectly correct code of laws for the governing of his life and the life of the people to whom he ministers. He will

find moral illumination and stimulus and much practical guidance if he approaches the Bible in this fashion. But he will also find many unnecessary problems and his method will rob the Bible of much of its power. For the Bible was not written to be a book of rules for slavish obedience. It sets forth principles to be interpreted and utilized by a growing and expanding personality. We have already seen that the viewing of the Bible as a code makes humanity shrink. It also makes the book a much smaller and less vital piece of writing. An earnest man will lead a sincere but often confused life under the terms of such a conception. A man with less earnestness will become a Pharisee battling for verbal distinctions of no real importance.

A man may approach the Bible thinking only of its inspiring spirit. He may glow before the warmth he finds there. He may treat the Bible as a sort of spiritual hearth fire where he is to keep his soul warm on winter nights. Much emotional glow will come from all this, and a life warm with a sense of the enrichment of

the Bible's message. But if such a man fails to understand that the Bible gives a program of activity, as well as a fountain of inspiration, the Scriptures can never do their full work in his life. His eager enthusiasm must be crystallized into deeds. His glowing heart must inspire enthusiastic doing of the will of God. If the Bible is king of a man's emotions without being ruler of his deeds, it has a poor and incapable ministry. We are not treating the Bible with respect when we go to it only to find spiritual thrills.

A man may approach the Bible viewing it as a mechanically perfect expression of the will of God. He may believe in its verbal inerrancy. He may work out a logical position that only a Bible without a mistake can be a divine book. With this view he may close his mind to the problems raised by close and candid scrutiny. He may be a Bible student of blind faith, not an investigator of fearless candor. Such a position will not rob the Bible of its power to speak great words, but it will make a man's relation to it in a measure

artificial, for the Bible is not such a book as this view assumes. A man is reading into the Bible his own conception of what it ought to be, instead of candidly receiving the book as it has been given. The birth of candor is the death warrant of this view. It is important for us to see that the Bible can never be permanently honored by a method which refuses to face facts which lie on the very surface of its contents, not to speak of deeper cleavages which appear as we go farther into its composition. The Bible's authority must be preserved without forced arguments or artificial and unreal defenses.

A man may come to the Scriptures in such a mood of cool, critical inspection that he has an eye only for the problems it presents. To such a man the Book becomes a dead body from which the life has fled. His work is not without its value. Many of the questions he raises are real questions. Many of the discussions he conducts will prove of importance in the field of scholarship; but if his sole interest is here, he misses the real significance of

the Bible, and even in matters of scholarship his judgment is often untrustworthy because he has no deep apprehension of the great creative moral and spiritual currents which move through the Book. To judge a book even in matters of literary criticism you need to know what it is about. Of course this man who brings nothing but critical acumen to the Bible does not find the message to set a preacher's heart on fire.

A man may approach the Bible as an earnest moral struggler. He finds in this book an interpretation of life which answers to his highest mood. More than that, it calls from above his highest mood. The Bible's words about sin and righteousness speak in a language of moral verity and authenticity which carry their own vindication. The first thing an earnest man feels is that here is an interpretation of life which sounds the same great note of moral tragedy and moral realism which he finds in life itself. When the Bible has spoken its word something in the far depths of a man's soul sounds forth a mighty "Amen."

Then the reader comes to the great figure which walks through the Gospels. It is a haunting picture. That winsome, perfect Man of Galilee seizes upon every outreaching nobility in a man's heart. Whatever may be the answer to critical questions, this portrait is the race's greatest moral and spiritual heritage. When he has really seen the portrait, the reader feels sure of that.

When in the deep mood of moral openness he comes to Paul's interpretation of the death of Christ something else happens. The ethical vitality of Paul's words seizes him. The sense of Christ's death as a great achievement, which makes possible the forgiveness of sin and all the wonder of the new life, masters him. As he surrenders to this conception the whole matter of the Bible and its mission becomes clear to him. In the joyful assurance of salvation he sees that the Bible is the book of redemption. Its adequacy lies not in minute and constant perfection of detail, but in the fact that it correctly portrays sin, that it gives a compelling view of Christ, and

that it proclaims the moral strategy of the cross. Because it is the book of salvation, because it so presents the need of salvation, the Saviour, and the way of salvation as to penetrate men's consciences and master their lives, it is the adequate vehicle of the revelation of God.

All that we have said in the last chapter of the authority of the fundamental truths and experiences of the Christian religion may be affirmed of the Bible. It is the literary vehicle of these truths and the creator of these experiences.

From the pages of the Bible there leap those facts and those calls of God which by their inherent vitality command men. The Bible is an open door. When a man who is really in earnest looks through the door there is that within which causes him to cast away doubt and fear and enter.

These great and creative facts and truths do not need any artificial protection. They stand in their own might. You do not have to possess a mechanically inerrant Bible in order to believe in the deadliness of

sin. You do not need to have a certain view of the book of Daniel in order to believe in the deity of Christ. You do not have to believe that the book of Jonah records sober history in order to accept the great redemptive deed on Calvary with your whole heart. When a man has come to rest in the personal appropriation of the great redemption, the Bible has come to a place of high and commanding authority in his life. But it is the authority of that which morally and spiritually satisfies. It is not the authority of formal and mechanical inerrancy.

The man with this conception of the Bible may come to believe in the composite authorship of the Hexateuch. It will not cause his hold of God to loosen. He is saved by faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who died for men. He is not saved by faith in the Mosaic authorship of the first series of books in the Old Testament.

The man at peace with God through the great reconciliation may come to believe that the body of the second part of Isaiah,

chapters 40 to 66, was written by a great unknown prophet of the exile. It will not disturb his faith. It is only the discovery of another Bible character. The words are not less true. They are not the less inspired because they were given through the lips of another man, rather than through the lips of Isaiah, son of Amoz. It simply means that another human heart was filled with the consciousness of God and the spirit of prophecy, that another man felt the divine compulsion and burst forth into noble speech declaring the message of God. We are richer by another prophet and have lost not a word of prophecy.

It may be that many a view of date and authorship and of the method of revelation will be changed by modern investigation. As long as the full sense of the Bible's doctrine of sin, the full glory of the deity of Christ, and the full moral potency of the deed on Calvary are untouched there has been nothing of real value lost.

The man with a redemptive experience adds to his fine candor and freedom from paralyzing fear or crippling prejudice in

the presence of biblical criticism, one or two other characteristics. He has a fearless belief in the supernatural. He never doubts a miracle because it is a miracle, if there was ethical occasion for it. His only demand in the presence of the claim of the miraculous is that the occasion of the miracle shall be worthy of the character of God. He has no hidden distrust, no vague self-conscious sense that, after all, God is not stronger than the system of things, which causes him to want to read the supernatural out of the Bible.

Then he has a noble conservatism in respect of the claims of modern scholarship. He is not a man who goes forth in the morning saying, "What new theory can I find and accept this day?" He demands that Christian criticism shall move with caution, and weigh with greatest care its evidence. He is not ready to call brilliant and spectacular speculations the final findings of unimpeachable authority. He does not believe in the inerrancy of the critics. So his position is one of quiet and firm assurance. He has sources of certainty

which criticism as such knows not of. The answer of his own experience has sealed his faith in the Bible as the authoritative book of redemption. Firm in this stronghold of a vital authority, he welcomes all careful and reverent scholarship, and listens with open mind to the words of those who ceaselessly work at the task of investigating the Word of God, guided by a desire for truth and not having the processes of their investigation polarized by rationalistic presuppositions. Even from rationalistic scholars he may learn many things, but he knows that they do not have the secret of the Bible, and he watches their work with a certain alert and critical scrutiny.

This is the attitude of the preacher-theologian who, with throbbing heart in which there is no fear, faces the inquiring eyes of eager men and women in this bewildered and transitional age. His house is built on a rock. He does not fear the storm. He has nothing to hide, nothing to apologize for, and no conception which needs artificial defense. As long as the

Bible has the only message which will satisfy human need there is nothing to fear. It emerges after every critical combat remaining the invincible rock of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER XIX
PEERING INTO THE FUTURE

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Peering into the Future

The preacher looks within, and many a discovery he makes as he watches and ponders the processes of his own mind and heart. The preacher looks without, and as he inspects the lives of men and the interplay of influence and activity in the life about him, his knowledge of the motives and the working qualities of men and the social organism is vastly increased. The preacher looks backward, and as he meditates on the meaning of the life of great personalities and great peoples in days that are gone, his outlook is enlarged and his thought is given new perspective and fullness. The preacher looks forward. He is eager to draw aside the curtain and see something of the character and meaning of days to come. He would know what is to be the consummation of life in this world, and what is to be the consummation in the other country beyond the veil. Then darker problems in the back-

ground of his thought concerning the future of those who choose and love and desire evil clamor to be solved.

He believes in a Christian consummation in this world. When individual men move out through the way of salvation toward the goal of sainthood, when they relate their Christian experience to all the rest of their thought and feeling and activity, when they apply themselves with all eagerness to the great task of regenerating society and winning the world for Christ, all this involves the promise of a great consummation in this world. The men of triumphant Christian life, investing their whole strength in the achievement of the victory of Christ here and now, are not working in vain. Evil is being defeated. Reforms are being victoriously secured. With a mighty, quiet energy the forces of Christ are pushing forward toward the dominance of the world. The consummation here has two aspects. The first is inner and complete victory in the lives of those who surrender their hearts to Christ. The second is power to hold in check and

thwart the evil designs of those who make the great refusal. The enthronement of good and the subduing of evil are the two sides of the Christian triumph in this world. The goal here is a world where there is enough of triumphant righteousness and devotion to Christ to master and rule the planet. But just because personality cannot be overwhelmed, just because the evil man, although he is checked and subdued in the expression of his evil, remains bad at heart, because even a perfect evangelism would not secure a perfect response, because in the kingliness of personality some men choose evil instead of good, this world will always be a world with a problem of evil. The fraternity of darkness will exist even in the days of the increasing triumph of the Brotherhood of Light. And this evil fraternity may burst the chains which bind it, may break forth into temporary strength, may fight to the death for a place in the life of the world. The eschatological discourses of Jesus and the forward look of the New Testament seem definitely characterized by a sense of

dire evil breaking forth in gigantic struggle with the forces of God in the climax of the world's life. There may yet be such cataclysmic struggles between the forces of righteousness and those of evil, such heroic combat even after the wide achievement of the victory of the sons of God, as shall make the great concluding epoch of the world's life. At any rate, such an outcome would be along the line of what seems very deep in New Testament consciousness. But any wild and clamorous outburst of evil, even in the largest and most heroic fashion, will be temporary. The final word is the triumph of righteousness and love. The consummation is the perfect victory of the Son of God.

When we look beyond the veil we must confess at once that there are many things we do not see. The distances are too great and the perspectives too vast for our unaccustomed eyes. The Bible is full of reserve and secrecy when we would turn to it for knowledge of the heavenly life, and altogether we must confess to thinking under many limitations and with im-

penetrable mystery on every side. At the same time there are some things we can be very sure of, quite as certain as we are of the Fatherhood of God and the tenderness of Christ. In the first place, the heavenly life will be a perfect experience of perfected persons. Sin and suffering, disease and death will be banished forever more. The righteous will find endless felicity in the heavenly home. Each individual life will come to perfect flower and perfect expression. All hidden meanings and possibilities in each life will be brought into consciousness and realized. Eternal growth, eternal joy, and eternal service will be the lot of each one of the saints of God.

That phrase "eternal service" points to a social as well as an individual consummation in heaven. The other country is not to be a place where hermit saints enjoy lonely felicity. Perfected men and women are to find a perfect social life forever and ever; each will have something to give to all the rest, and each will have something to receive from all the rest. So heaven

will be the perpetual service of the saints living together in an unending passion of self-giving in quenchless love.

In this life all personal faculties will be enlarged and receive infinite possibility of exercise and enjoyment. And all this activity will be at once the perfect expression of the individual life and the rich service of the heavenly brotherhood. The thing that most deeply expresses the life of each person will be the thing that most richly contributes to the whole heavenly brotherhood. The social life of the saints will find multitudinous expressions beyond all our thought. The dim dreams of brotherhood which we have here will be far surpassed in the perfect social life, embodying itself perpetually in forms of new wonder and meaning and power. More than this, the perfected individual and social life will be in the presence and fellowship of the living God. That perfect social life of the Godhead will meet in actual touch the perfected life of the saints. The companionship with God which men have known in their hearts will be fully realized

in the actual contact of the heavenly fulfillment. To live forever in the presence of God, to love forever in the presence of God, to serve forever in the presence of God —that is heaven.

Many questions remain unanswered about the heavenly life. The one word about them all which may be said with complete assurance is this: the heavenly life will give to all who share it every gift which can come from infinite righteousness and infinite love. Of this we may be sure, and with this we may well be satisfied.

A dark, haunting problem lifts its head to confront us. We have been speaking of the future of the righteous. We have been speaking of the high felicity of the saints of God. What shall we say of the future of the wicked? What shall we say of those who deliberately and finally and eternally reject the outreaches of the love of God? It would be a pleasant thing if we could say that there are no such people. We would be glad if we could say that somehow, somewhere, every human soul will at last respond to the love of God,

that the great surrender will at last be made by every person in all the world. We would be glad if we could say that. But we do not dare to say it. The Bible, with its close, penetrating consciousness of the actualities of human life, does not hold out that hope. And the more closely we study men, the more we are convinced that they are capable of a certain malignant vitality, of a real allegiance to evil, knowing that it is evil, of a personal commitment to the kingdom of sin as definite as a saint's personal commitment to the kingdom of God. That singular and regal choice of evil may go to the very center of the meaning of a man's life.

If this is true, we would be glad to believe that when a man becomes totally bad, annihilation is his doom. We would be relieved if we could say that a man comes to a certain place where he has so completely allied himself to evil that he has severed all contact with the good which is the source of all. The penalty is just the loss of existence. The man's personal life vanishes from the universe to

appear no more forever. We would be relieved if we could say that. But we cannot feel that we are justified in saying it.

When we study men who with powerful personal intention have flung their lives into evil, we do not find a waning vitality seeming just on the verge of extinction. Such personal choice of evil often has a mighty vigor. It is not weakness. It is strength. Only it is bad strength and not good strength. A man never seems more alive than when, gathering himself together for a great deed of decision, he acts. And as far as personal vigor is concerned, he is as mightily alive when he chooses evil as when he chooses good. There is often something about the psychology of a merely weak man which suggests waning vitality. But there is nothing of the kind about a really bad man. All the magnificent potencies of personal volition are flung out in powerful mutiny against the good of life. There is nothing about it all to suggest a belief in annihilation.

It seems then that we must believe in the future conscious existence of the wicked.

And what we must affirm is that they will find a destiny which answers to their character. They have chosen utter evil. That choice has become one with the deepest meaning of their lives. The kingdom of God is impossible forever for them because they have made themselves forever incapable of understanding or responding to it. Their environment must be the reflection of their own character. It is not so much that they go to hell. They become hell.

One thing must be said at this point. Beyond the veil the wicked will remain wicked in intention, but they will have lost all power of putting intention into efficient activity. God will have conquered them in the sense that they will have no power to thwart him. They will not be a menace to the Heavenly Brotherhood. Hell is an experience of perpetual but powerless intention to repudiate the reign of God.

This is a conception from which we may well shrink, but the full facing of the moral significance of life seems to

drive us to it. And, terrible as it is, we see that it is without ethical cruelty. It is only those who have deliberately and knowingly and finally repudiated the outreach of eternal love who will know this experience. We find a tragic note in the final universe if we accept this view. But it is a note of moral realism. It brings us at last to the place where we may see the full moral tragedy of the worst of life. And it is surely better than those delicate and sentimental philosophies which by their cloying sweetness would take all moral energy from the universe.

Life itself is lived under awful sanctions. We do not dare to ignore the majesty of the moral must for the sake of even the demands of tender hearts. There will be a minor strain even in the heavenly consummation. But it will be only after infinite love has exhausted itself beating against human hardness that a soul will be lost.

The practical outcome of all this is an emphasis on the present. No one need choose evil instead of good. No one need

choose darkness instead of light. The love of God has gone the full length of sacrifice. He who spared not his own Son calls us by all the pangs of the cross, calls us by the hour of agony on Calvary, to open our hearts and receive the great redemption. Everything that heaven offers will be ours if we will have it so.

It is a great, glorious, tragic universe in which we live, with a mighty consummation here and a perfect consummation yonder. It has its high sanctions which we violate at infinite peril. It has its yearning summons of infinite love which would lead us to the heights of God. We must choose.

CHAPTER XX
THE CHRISTIAN WORLD-VIEW

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There are a great many preachers with a fragmentary gospel. Some one Christian truth is forever shining in their sky. It is so dazzlingly bright that they can see nothing else. Some one experience fills their thought. It is so completely occupying that they can think of no other. Great service is often performed by these apostles of a part of the Christian faith. The word they have to say is true and deep and real. They say it with passion. They give it forth with power. And its influence is responded to wherever they preach.

As truly appreciative as we are of these men, there are one or two facts which we need to remember. First, it requires the whole of the circuit of gospel truth to complete the life of a man. Second, a life built on a fragment of Christian truth, however noble and important that truth may be, is sure to be itself not only fragmentary, but disproportionate, and may even become

ineffective and eccentric. The preacher needs a complete view of the faith because nothing less will enable him adequately to minister to the lives of his people.

It is a matter for congratulation if a man has many Christian truths moving in his heart and his brain. The variety of his Christian interest and knowledge will make his ministry varied and fertile. He will touch the life and the interests of men in many ways. His preaching will be full of noble surprises as he brings from his treasure-house new thoughts and truths. His mental versatility will be a great asset to his Church and to the enlarging life of his people. But it is not enough to have many truths coming and going in one's mind like the guests at some great reception, with no deeper tie than the fact that they come to the same house. A man's knowledge of Christian things and of life must be classified and organized into a systematic and harmonious view of the world. He must not only have many truths at his command, but he must know their relation to each other, and the way

in which together they unite to form the organism of Christian belief. This is a matter much profounder than putting conceptions into mental pigeon holes according to some artificial scheme. A man is not to force his conceptions into a mechanical and rigid system. He is to find the way in which they really unite according to their own nature. He is not to make a world-view. He is to discover a world-view.

In a way life resembles those tiny and variously shaped bits of card which sometimes lie confusedly on a table. Sitting by the table a man slowly pieces together the puzzle picture, until at last each small piece has found its place, and the complete picture fronts him. He does not cut the cards to fit some new plan of his own. He patiently works until he finds where each piece of card belongs. The preacher needs to be a man with a great passion for a complete world-view. It is only the whole picture with which he can be finally contented as he ministers to his congregation. And he needs great patience in seeking to find where each

fact belongs. The sense that the facts must make the system, and not the system make the facts, will save a man from much academic superficiality and inadequate thought. His aim is not merely to get a system, but to get a system where every Christian fact and every human fact will settle down in complete content, and the whole force and quality of all these facts will be preserved in the larger whole.

Of course this is an endless task. But because there will always be more facts to place and enlargements to make in the great scheme, a man need not become discouraged and refuse to make any attempt to organize his knowledge into a system at all. He knows that he can be doing real work and making genuine headway, though there is always more to be done. He is building a vast cathedral of the mind. And although it rises slowly, and many a part is yet to be built, he rejoices to be at work in relation to a structure where each detail has reference to the unity and harmony of the final building.

A few suggestions may be made in concluding and summarizing this volume, as to the characteristic conceptions of the Christian world-view and the way in which they are to be joined together.

For the Christian interpretation of life personality is the final fact. It does not go back to ultimate forces or ultimate things. It goes back to an ultimate person. Its whole philosophy of existence is built up out of personal experience, and finds its explanation in the perfect personal life of God. Only God is absolute. Everything else is dependent. Persons are his creation and live through his constant energizing. Things are his thoughts made concrete by his will in personal experience. Apart from God no person and no thing could exist for an instant.

The vast system of things is real in the sense that it is a background of experience as dependable as the character of God. It is not real in the sense of an independent existence or the capacity to be a part of any experience except through the thought of God.

Persons created by God have a real though constantly dependent life. The power of self-consciousness and self-direction is God's great gift to personal beings.

The Christian world-view has very definite notions about the mental life of God. Surely that life transcends all that man can know. But as surely it includes some things that men may be certain of. Perfect knowledge of all reality is the mental characteristic of God. There is nothing foreign to his thought and nothing beyond the ken of his mind. We do not have to form a description of the method by which God is omniscient, but we do know that it is impossible to think about him with validity except as the Infinite One, fully and constantly conscious of all that there is to be known.

The Christian world-view has certain great conceptions of the character of God. His completely perfect nature is the basis of all ethics. The perfect is that which conforms to the nature of God. The demand for this is written in the very nature of man. The very gift of self-direction to

human beings involves the possibility of breaking from this standard. This break marks the entrance of sin into the world.

The Christian world-view has certain great conceptions of the origin of the social meaning of life. God himself is a social being. There are social distinctions in the Godhead. Here are the ultimate source of love and the basis of all the human dream of fellowship. So the basis of all that we find in the mental, moral, and social experience of man and the explanation of all his life are to be found in the nature and character of God.

The Christian world-view centers in a tragedy. The blighting effects of sin create the problem of which Christianity is the solution. To save human beings who have broken from God's perfect law and violated the behests of their own natures—to rescue them and at the same time completely to satisfy all the high and holy sanctions of the life of God—is the great matter with the Christian religion. There are several aspects to the solution. The first has to do with a person great enough

to undertake to deal with the problem. Here emerges the full conception of the deity of Christ. The second aspect is the performance of a deed great and final enough to solve the problem. Here we come upon the death of Christ on the cross as the pivotal point in the moral history of the world. The third is the application of the great solution to all the need of men. Now comes individual acceptance of the Saviour and his work, the experience of salvation, the call of the far goal of sainthood, and all the great experiences of the mastering of life and society in the name of Christ, and going forth to win the world by the power of the great evangel.

The Christian world-view has certain great conceptions of the final universe. Here God is enthroned forever in the midst of the saints. For those who have responded directly (or with moral and spiritual intention indirectly) to the great evangel, there are endless life, growth, joy, and service, and the absence of sin, pain, and death forever. The fraternity of the

saved has at last become a moral reflection of the life of God himself. For those who have deliberately and finally and absolutely set themselves against God there is the eternal submission of rebellious wills. God rules them, but they have no joy and no response to the love which surges through the universe. They represent the ultimate tragedy of perverse personality.

The Christian world-view commends itself to men not by any hard-and-fast logic, but by its moral and spiritual vitality. Its claim is that no other set of conceptions alive in the minds and hearts of men will so answer to every need and set free all the great energies of the growing life. Its vindication is that it brings to victory the best of life and overthrows the worst of life, that it is a living, energizing interpretation of existence and human experience which conserves everything worth conserving, and moves out in triumphant vitality to make the future of men full and rich and morally and spiritually adequate.

The Christian world-view is a critic of other interpretations of life and its crit-

icism comes at last to this. These other interpretations fail to do justice to the whole of life and experience. There is ethical or spiritual or intellectual flaw somewhere. The advancing, expanding experience of the race outruns them. They speak the voice of some aspect of experience but not of experience itself.

So it is with the purely scientific explanations. They are brilliant as achievements of classification. They organize our knowledge of phenomena in wonderfully efficient fashion, but they fail to answer those ultimate questions of the mind which lie back of classification. And they fail to do justice to the moral and spiritual aspects of experience.

The outlook of agnosticism and pessimism fails because they rule out two notes of growing and expanding life. Uncertainty and gloom are not parts of normal experience, and they cannot be made the constructive principles of an adequate philosophy. An organized uncertainty is a philosophical product which has quite lost contact with the realities of experience.

And an organized gloom is an attempt to consider the abnormal, the decisive matter in human life. The healthful and outreaching life of man simply brushes aside these world-views. Life itself has the right of way, and however learned and inspiring any particular interpretation of the problems of existence and human experience, when it is smaller than life it simply must go down.

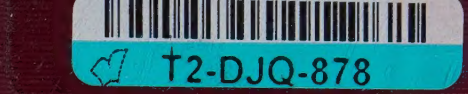
The final Christian contention as to a world-view is that sin and regeneration, a divine Christ, a redemptive deed on Calvary, and a new and triumphant life coming from the acceptance of the Christ of the cross are the cardinal and defining facts of human experience. Any world-view which leaves them out is simply failing to see what is most important in human life and experience. These conceptions and facts express that which corresponds to the reality of things. Their vitality is their protection and defense. No interpretation which ignores them can permanently secure itself. The facts are on the side of the evangelical interpretation

of life. And in this is its perennial security.

The preacher-theologian rejoices as he approaches his tasks. He has an experience which meets his deepest need. He has a message which will speak to every mental and emotional and moral and spiritual outreach which has a place in the lives of his people. He has a world-view which interprets all of life about the commanding personality of the Son of God and his sacrificial death—a world-view which conserves and expresses all which is called for by the great interests of the life of the race.

All of this cannot be given forth at once. He is a patient, eager student of the life of his people. Day by day he gives forth that which is called for by their present experience, and that which will stimulate them to make further demand. Day by day he puts in place the stones which are one day to stand before them as a great temple of vital and commanding Christian thought. Day by day he gives forth that which is to issue in all the varied and

multiplied activities of the Christian life. Some day his people will catch the splendor of the sight of the whole of the Christian faith. After that day has come they will always live in the light of the great vision.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